

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 BMP Implementation Teams, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, USDA-NRCS and/or county Extension staff can assist producers with BMP implementation and record-keeping methods.

For assistance with enrolling in and implementing BMPs contact:

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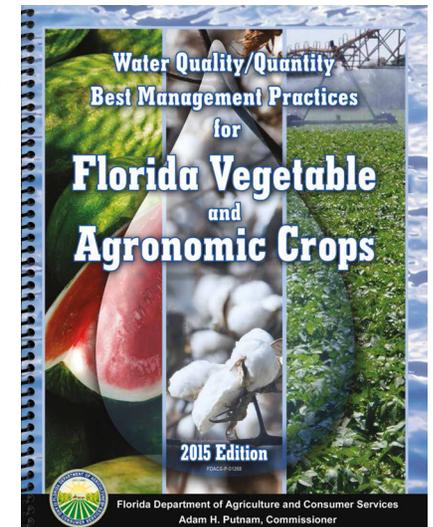
Best Management Practices for Florida Vegetable and Agronomic Crops

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 vegetable and agronomic crops 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.



**Florida Department of
Agriculture and Consumer Services**
Adam H. Putnam, Commissioner

Examples of Vegetable and Agronomic Crops BMPs

Precision Agriculture

- Using precision agriculture technology, such as GPS

Irrigation System Maintenance and Evaluation

- Understanding the level of irrigation system efficiency
- Properly maintaining irrigation system for distribution uniformity

Tissue Testing

- Utilizing tissue testing to determine crop nutrient needs as part of a comprehensive fertilizer management plan

Soil Testing

- Utilizing soil testing to determine crop nutrient needs as part of a comprehensive fertilizer management plan

Conservation Tillage

- Practicing conservation tillage, maintaining a minimum of 50 percent residue cover throughout the year

Field Borders

- Maintaining vegetated field borders around the perimeter of the field, especially where runoff enters or leaves the field

Contour Farming

- Establishing row direction as closely as possible to the natural contour in order to minimize erosion

Wetlands and Springs Protection

- Maintaining a 25-foot undisturbed upland buffer exterior to the landward extent of wetlands

Water Supply

- Utilizing a backflow prevention device to prevent contamination to the water source

Tailwater Recovery

- Properly maintaining a tailwater recovery system and integrating the water source into an irrigation plan

Grassed Waterways

- Using visual inspections, topographic maps, and/or basic survey equipment to identify areas where grassed waterways are needed to convey water from fields

Integrated Pest Management

- Storing pesticides in an enclosed, roofed structure with an impervious floor, away from surface waters and above the 100-year floodplain

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.