

What are Agricultural Best Management Practices?

Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) are practical measures that producers can take to reduce the amount of fertilizers, animal waste, and other pollutants entering our water resources. BMPs are designed to improve water quality while maintaining agricultural production. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) has adopted BMPs for most commodities in the state. Each BMP manual covers key aspects of water quality and water conservation. Typical best management practices include:

Nutrient Management practices to determine nutrient needs of crops, and consideration of nutrient sources (including manure), application rates, timing of nutrient application, and placement of nutrients to minimize impacts to water resources.

Irrigation Management practices to address the method and scheduling of irrigation events to minimize water and nutrient losses to the environment.

Water Resource Protection practices that use buffers and setbacks to reduce or prevent the transport of nutrients and sediments from production areas to waterbodies.

Why should I implement BMPs?

Benefits of enrolling in and implementing FDACS BMPs include:

- Reduction of agricultural production impacts to natural resources.
- Eligibility for cost-share funding for certain BMPs (as funds are available).
- Technical assistance with BMP implementation.
- Presumption of compliance with state water quality standards for the pollutants addressed by the BMPs.
- Release from the provisions of section 376.307(5), F.S., (fines for damages) for pollutants addressed by the BMPs.

FDACS BMPs for various commodities can be found at: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Water/Agricultural-Best-Management-Practices>



What is the enrollment process like?

Site Evaluation

FDACS staff are available to assist producers with on-site assessment and BMP selection. During the BMP assessment and enrollment process they will help you evaluate the characteristics of your property and your operation, identify the BMPs you currently implement, and determine whether there are additional FDACS BMPs applicable to your operation.

FDACS staff will document current BMPs and applicable new BMPs on a checklist, which will be submitted to FDACS with a signed Notice of Intent to implement the BMPs. The assessment will take from two to four hours, depending on the size of the operation, the commodity, and other factors.

Things to Have on Hand

It would be helpful to have the following on hand during the enrollment visit:

- Copy of tax bill – to ensure having the correct parcel ID numbers
- Management records such as soil test results
- A map or aerial photograph of the operation
- Personnel who are knowledgeable about the operation

After Enrolling in BMPs

An important part of BMP implementation is record keeping, as specified in FDACS rules and BMP manuals. BMP records should be accurate, clear, and well-organized. You may develop your own record-keeping forms or use the ones provided in the manuals. FDACS staff, UF/IFAS Extension Agents, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and USDA-NRCS can assist producers with BMP implementation and record-keeping methods.

Contact Information

For assistance with BMP enrollment, call (863) 467-3250 or email AgBmpHelp@FDACS.gov.

To identify and directly contact field staff in other areas, please visit

<https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Agricultural-Water-Policy/Organization-Staff>

