After Enrolling in BMPs

An important part of BMP implementation is documentation through 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 manual.

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

For assistance with enrolling in and implementing BMPs:
Call - (850) 617-1727 or
Email - AgBMPHelp@FDACS.gov

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Office of Agricultural Water Policy
407 South Calhoun Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Office: (850) 617-1700
Fax: (850) 617-1701
https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Agricultural-Water-Policy

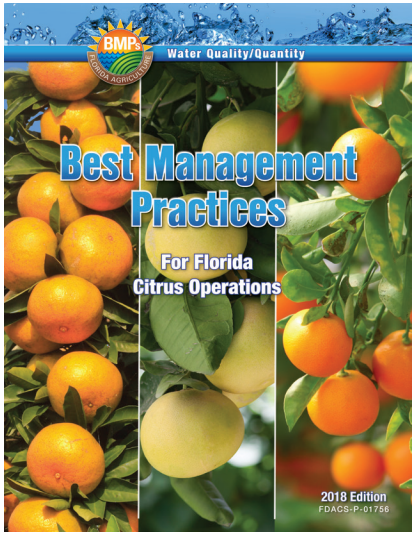
Best Management Practices
for Florida Citrus Operations

What are 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.

Working with stakeholders, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) has adopted a statewide citrus manual that covers key aspects of water quality and water conservation. Typical best management practices include:

Nutrient Management practices to determine nutrient needs of plants and forage, 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, setbacks, and fencing, when appropriate, to reduce or prevent the transport of nutrients and sediments from production areas to waterbodies.

Examples of Citrus BMPs

Nutrient Management

- Choosing appropriate sources and formulations of fertilizer based on nutritional needs of the plants
- Using soil and tissue tests and UF/IFAS recommended fertilizer rates
- Calibrating and adjusting fertilizer application equipment
- Using split applications for soluble fertilizers
- Keeping records of nutrient application and location

Irrigation Management

- Using tools such as soil moisture sensors, water table observation wells, crop water use information, or weather data, to make good irrigation decisions
- Monitoring and maintaining irrigation systems and utilizing a Mobile Irrigation Lab if available
- Using the FAWN application irrigation and frost/freeze tools or other applicable weather monitoring tool when irrigating for frost/freeze protection

Water Resources Protection

- Installing and maintaining appropriate vegetated buffers
- Using backflow-prevention devices at the wellhead
- Maintaining vegetative cover in row middles
- Managing water velocities near drainage structures to prevent sediment from entering the drainage system
- Restricting pesticides applications to within the citrus tree canopy drip line
- Stabilizing bare soil areas with grass or vegetation after soil bedding to minimize erosion

Why should I enroll in the FDACS BMP program?

- Some BMPs can help increase production efficiency and reduce costs while helping to protect the environment.
- Enrollment provides producers access to technical assistance with BMP implementation.
- Producers become eligible for cost-share, when available, for certain practices.
- Implementing verified FDACS-adopted BMPs provides a pre-sumption of compliance with state water quality standards for the pollutants addressed by the BMPs.
- 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 enroll in the FDACS BMP program?

1. Schedule a meeting with an FDACS staff for a free assessment of your operation to determine which BMPs are applicable to your operation.
2. Complete a BMP checklist, sign the Notice of Intent to implement the BMPs (NOI), and submit checklist and NOI to FDACS Office of Agricultural Water Policy.
3. Keep a copy of the checklist and signed NOI in your records.
4. Implement and maintain the applicable BMPs and keep adequate records to maintain a presumption of compliance with state water quality standards.