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?

- Some BMPs can help you operate more efficiently and reduce costs, while you help protect water resources and natural systems.
- 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 presumption 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 enroll in the BMP program and implement BMPs avoid the expense of conducting a FDEP or WMD approved monitoring plan.
- BMP participation demonstrates agriculture’s commitment to water resource protection and helps maintain support for this alternative approach.

FDACs BMPs for various commodities can be found at: [https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Water/Agricultural-Best-Management-Practices](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 (850) 617-1727 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