

Land & Water fact sheet

Information management

What is it?

Information management is the tracking of different systems within your business such as cost tracking and production tracking. It also includes other activities such as record keeping.

Information management around the farm can be an inconvenience at first due to the extra work involved in setting up a system. However, when an information management system is used effectively, it can be very useful to access information for your own use as well as for auditing.

Record keeping and information management are also vital to show that appropriate steps were taken to manage chemical applications, workplace hazards or employee records, for example.

How can it help me?

Records turn data into information. There is no point keeping track of production costs if this information can not be interpreted and used to improve systems or the quality of produce on the farm.

Data collection could include:

- fertiliser, chemical, traceability, harvesting and packing records
- expenses (including inputs and labour)
- employee records
- environmental records (including rainfall, water quality, soil erosion, soil carbon, soil activity)
- agronomy records (pest monitoring records, fertiliser and sap test/leaf nutrient records)
- financial records.

Information management keeps records and costs, in a logical order, turning the data collected into information that can be used to improve the overall running of the farm. Information management is an important component of good planning.

Information management

Whichever information storage system you choose, it must be advantageous to your farm management. A simple, useable system will mean that you are more likely to record the data and use it to improve operations around the farm.

Your chosen system does not need to be complex. It could be as simple as a flick through card system or a hand written spread sheet, through to a computerised system such as a Microsoft Excel™ spreadsheet or a specially designed computer program allowing an integration of different aspects of your farm. An efficient information management system will help store data securely and make it easier to retrieve information ready for external auditing or your own data analysis to help make decisions for the future.

Information management continued

Training and courses

There are training courses at all levels available through the state and federal governments that can help you improve your computer skills. Subsidised courses are available through FarmBis that can get your computer skills up to speed. To find out more about these, contact the training manager at Growcom who will be able to link you up with the appropriate course.

For further information:

FarmBis – a major learning initiative jointly funded by the Queensland and Australian governments.

To find out more about Farm Management Systems contact Growcom on 07 3620 3863 or visit www.growcom.com.au/knowledgeplant

References:

Sustainability in Sugar – A Self-Assessment Workbook. SRDC, BSES, QLD Canegrowers, QLD EPA, RWUEI, NSW Canegrowers

Best Management Practice Guidelines - Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme, Australia (NIASA) www.ngia.com.au/accreditation



Level 1/385 St Paul's Tce Fortitude Valley 4006 | PO Box
202 Fortitude Valley QLD 4006 | Tel: 07 3620 3844 |
Fax: 07 3620 3880 | Email: growcom@growcom.com.au |
www.growcom.com.au