

Land & Water fact sheet

Farm Management Systems (FMS)

What is it?

The Farm Management System (FMS) approach is designed to help growers to:

- better plan their management processes
- assess their management performance and effectiveness of management practices
- identify opportunities for improvements or efficiencies
- demonstrate management practices and outcomes to external stakeholders.

A FMS provides a way for growers to deal with their entire farm and business management needs in an integrated and efficient way.

The system helps growers to integrate their planning and documentation (and possibly auditing) for all aspects of running a successful, profitable and sustainable farm business, such as:

- food safety
- quality assurance (QA)
- property planning
- environmental management
- quarantine and interstate certification
- workplace health and safety (WH&S)
- financial and business management.

How does it work?

A management system for any business supports better planning, risk assessment, management actions, monitoring and review.

A FMS is used to track and review the implementation of your plans. This assists in efficient record keeping. It also encourages the farm manager

to generate and analyse information from farm maps, risk assessments, benchmarks, records, documented procedures and monitoring data and use this information to identify opportunities to find efficiencies or improvements.

This integrated management system can help enhance profitability, sustainability and professionalism of running a farm business by:

- addressing critical business development
- managing risks
- meeting environmental and sustainability goals.

It can also help you demonstrate compliance with regulatory requirements and help you to maintain certification to a range of market standards and assurance schemes.

Self management by farmers throughout an industry can reduce the need for the introduction of new government regulations. This requires demonstration of effective management of environmental issues, natural resource efficiency, food safety, farm safety and other community concerns.

Why is it important?

With increasing pressure from market demands, community expectations, environmental groups and regulatory requirements, there



Farm Management Systems (FMS) continued

is a growing need for the rural community to formalise their business operations using farm management system programs.

How can it help me?

The Growcom FMS is a new rural initiative designed to give horticultural growers on ground support and assist them to formalise their business operations. The FMS program is a step by step approach to addressing the most limiting factors in a farming operation, whether it is WH&S, quality assurance accreditation or soil health management.

Through the implementation of a FMS you as a grower can improve:

- competitiveness – by highlighting where efficiencies can be made and maintaining procedures that streamline management and record keeping
- streamlining – the FMS process can help draw together multiple records and plans for diverse purposes into one streamlined system. This should make business management, certification audits and dealings with institutions such as banks and the tax office easier
- meeting and anticipating market and consumer demands
- accountability – the FMS process will help you document and demonstrate how you are managing your property and farming activities to minimise impacts on the environment and to optimise efficiency of natural resource use
- compliance – an FMS should simplify the process of demonstrating compliance to regulatory requirements and for accessing government licences, permits and approvals.

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

References

<http://www.sustainable-agriculture.org/start.html>

Horticulture for Tomorrow Guidelines

Farmcare Code of Practice – Chris Lindsay, QFVG



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