



## HOW FERT\$MART ARE YOU?

Optimum use of fertilisers creates a “win- win” situation for both farmers and consumers.

- It provides value for money for dairy farmers, important for profitability
- It ensures minimal environmental impact, boosting consumer confidence that farmers are acting responsibly in the production of dairy products.

There are a series of common sense actions agreed to by farmers, agronomists, and fertiliser distributors that indicate if a specific farm business is optimising the use of fertilisers on their farm.

Do this quick test to see how you rate. Depending upon your score you may have to adjust your management to achieve a “best practice rating”.

The following questions cover the key components to being a Fert\$mart dairy farm business.

Question	My score 0 to 10
✓ <b>Do I consider soil type constraints in the development of a fertiliser plan? E.g. free draining sandy soils leach potassium rapidly.</b> 0 = soil type is not considered at all -->10 = Soil type is always considered	
✓ <b>Do I have a farm plan with accurate paddock areas?</b> 0 = no farm plan with paddock areas -->10 = A mapped farm plan with precise paddock areas.	
✓ <b>Are there areas on my farm that are likely to have different nutrient levels due to management issues or practices? E.g. night grazing areas, effluent areas etc. Do I have them identified to be treated differently in regard to nutrient applications?</b> 0= There are different areas but they are not fertilized differently --> 10 = Farm Management Zones (FMZ) are precisely calculated and nutrients applied according to the requirements of each FMZ.	
✓ <b>Do I conduct soil tests using the same transect within each FMZ, via the same NATA accredited laboratory, at least every two years?</b> This is to assess the soil fertility <u>trends</u> on the farm. 0 = NATA accredited soil tests have not been done for 5 years or more -->10 = soil tests are completed in the same paddocks and the same transect across the paddock every two years.	
✓ <b>Have I investigated the potential use of effluent and manure on areas of the farm? Have I turned this potential into action?</b> 0 = on farm nutrients are not utilised at all and investigations have not been investigated -->10 = Use of on farm nutrients has been investigated and installed and accounts for 20% or more of the nutrients applied or mapped area of the farm.	

✓	<b>Do I evaluate the associated animal, human and environmental risks when nutrients are applied during the year?</b> 0 = No consideration is undertaken and the nutrients are applied irrespective -->10 = All risks are considered and evaluated before all fertiliser applications.	
✓	<b>If imported feed on to the farm is &gt; 20% of feed consumed, do I consider it as a nutrient source and incorporate it into a nutrient budget and the analysis of trends in soil tests results?</b> 0 = It is relevant (greater than 20%) but is not considered at all and no nutrient budget is done -->10 = It is considered when relevant and used in context with the trends of soil test results, and incorporated into a nutrient budget.	
✓	<b>Do I develop an annual fertiliser plan using all of the above factors, then implement it subject to the seasonal and environmental conditions encountered?</b> 0 = There is no annual fertiliser plan prepared -->10 = an annual fertiliser plan is prepared then implemented and reviewed as the year proceeds.	
✓	<b>Does someone (me, my agronomist, my fertiliser distributor) keep detailed records of what nutrients have been spread and where on the farm? Are these referred to in the development of future plans?</b> 0 = No records are kept -->10= records are kept virtually on a paddock by paddock basis.	
✓	<b>Do I consider basic soil health indicators such as soil structure, in the development of a soil nutrient plan?</b> 0 = Soil health aspects are not considered at all -->10= Soil health issues are always considered.	

### What does your total score tell you about how Fert\$mart you are?

**Above 90** It is likely that optimum, responsible use of nutrients is occurring in your business.

**70-90** Fert\$mart compliant; no action essential but could be considered.

**Below 50 - 70** Adjustments are required to become Fert\$mart compliant.

**Less than 50** Significant changes are urgently required to become compliant.

If you rated below 70% it may require discussion with your Fert\$mart approved advisor.

You can immediately find useful information on the Fert\$mart website:

<http://fertsmart.dairyingfortomorrow.com.au/>