

farm management systems

About the Farm Management Systems initiative

The Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) recognises that in today's business climate there is an ongoing requirement to keep improving the profitability and sustainability of farm enterprises across the intensive agriculture sector. That is why QFF and its member organisations have committed to the Farm Management Systems (FMS) initiative to give producers the tools they need to manage risks on-farm and improve their business.

What is a farm management system?

A farm management system is a voluntary, structured, step-by-step approach to managing agricultural businesses. The system can be used by primary producers to identify and manage the risks which may occur as a result of their enterprise. It is a tool to help drive smart business management, encourage development and achievement of more sustainable and profitable farming practices.

A farm management system can help draw diverse on-farm management issues together under a common flexible approach. It is a tool that is easy to implement and has the benefit of allowing individual producers to determine their rate of improvement depending on their individual circumstances.

Ultimately, FMS is about producers having more control over their future. By focusing on the management of risk, FMS programs will help producers to be better prepared for future challenges and

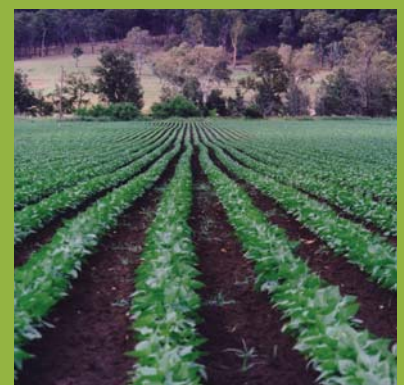
will allow them to clearly demonstrate to the wider community and governments that they are managing their land in a responsible manner. This is consistent with QFF's long argued position that better sustainability outcomes will be achieved through innovative, voluntary on-farm measures than by rigid, imposed regulation.

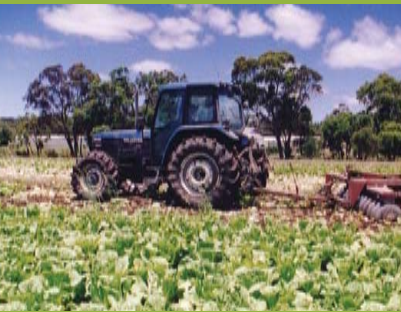
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FMS programs

Several QFF member organisations have developed or are developing programs that help their industry members implement an FMS in their business. Examples of FMS programs are Cotton Industry BMP, Sugarcane FMS, Dairying Better 'n Better for Tomorrow, Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme (Australia), Meat Chicken EMS, and Growcom's FMS Program. An enterprise's FMS may be implemented through a single program or a number of individual programs linked together by a systematic approach to managing risks.

The industry-led nature of FMS programs reflects emerging policy issues and producer needs, as well as national and international directions in marketing





that may impact on an industry or product. Industry ownership of FMS programs is important and the current level of industry collaboration on FMS program development by QFF members is unprecedented.

Working Together – a framework for coordinated action

QFF and member organisations recognise that by working together, efficiencies should be achieved. The FMS Framework outlines the coordination and developmental process that QFF and its member organisations will engage in to roll-out industry FMS programs during the next four years. The content of a specific industry FMS is ultimately the responsibility of the respective member organisation, with this Framework encouraging a collaborative approach to developing FMS programs. This will be essential to meet the needs of multi-commodity enterprises and to help ensure that FMS programs have rigour and credibility.

Partnerships are important to progress the FMS initiative. This is why QFF has signed a Memoranda of Understanding with the Queensland Government and the Queensland Regional Natural Resource Management Groups Collective to facilitate the development and rollout of FMS.

Implementation of FMS will be a long process, involving cultural change not only among primary producers but also within industry organisations and government. However the commitment displayed in the FMS Framework by QFF and its member organisations demonstrates our collective determination to move forward.

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For more information

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