

NORTH QUEENSLAND BANANA INDUSTRY

WATER QUALITY STRATEGY

2017 – 2020



FOREWORD

The banana industry has a great reputation for adopting environmental best management practices. The majority of growers respect the natural environment and the Great Barrier Reef and understand the impact their farming can have on the quality of water in local catchments. There are increasing numbers of growers implementing best management practices on their farms with the industry having reduced the rate of nitrogen application by 40% over the last 10 years. While this is an outstanding achievement, there is room for improvement.

This Water Quality Strategy has been written with a focus on extension and working with growers to help them improve their adoption of nutrient and sediment management practices. It is the goal of the Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) to help more growers farm at best practice without compromising their productivity and profitability. Consequently, this Strategy contains targets and actions that demonstrate that the ABGC is committed to helping growers improve the water quality of the Great Barrier Reef. This approach to sustainable farming is increasingly important to many Australians.

The Strategy lays out the priorities for the ABGC for the next three years with a clear focus on reducing the amount of nutrients and soil leaving farms. The ABGC will work closely with funding and delivery partners to develop new extension tools that will support growers adopt practice change so that these changes can be quantified, measured and achieved.

The ABGC encourages growers to get on board and adopt best management practices so that the industry can proudly showcase its responsible approach to farming.



Chair - Australian Banana Growers' Council



GOAL

The banana industry will continue to contribute to improved water quality and health of the Great Barrier Reef.

OBJECTIVE

The banana industry will contribute to a 10% decrease in dissolved inorganic nitrogen and a 5% decrease in sediment run off to improve the water quality of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) Lagoon by 2020.



STRATEGY

North Queensland banana growers will be supported to improve their production standards and adopt recognised best management practices. Specifically, this strategy will focus on assisting growers to:

- apply the optimum amount of nutrients to their banana crops; and
- retain soil on their farms.

Targets

- Over the next four years, the banana industry will participate in modelling and monitoring work to identify the production areas and practices that are at the highest risk of contributing to poor water quality and implement changes to management practices to mitigate the risks. Specifically,

-



2. Extension material

- Banana growers' adoption of BMP will be supported through the design of extension material and tools. Examples include:
 - Nutrient budgeting tools and plans;
 - Electronic extension and decision making tools such as smart device applications, the BMP Guidelines and videos;
 - Case studies to demonstrate best practice and innovation;
 - BMP Guidelines that reflect evolving best practice;
 - Farm and topographical maps to improve farm layout; and
 - Fact Sheets and other technical information products.

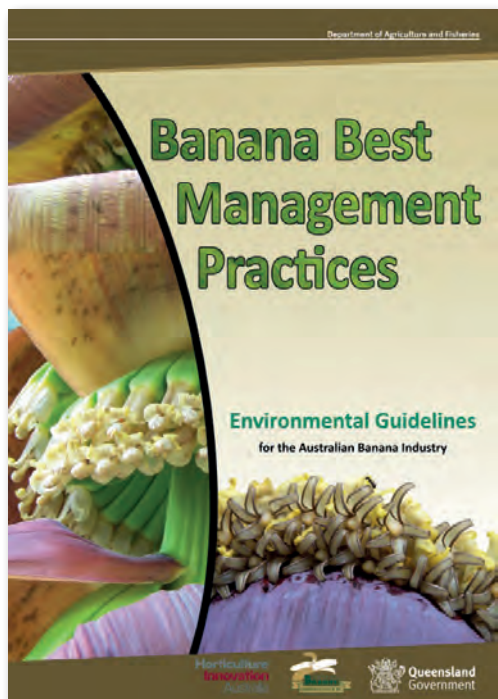
Targets

- **Commencing in 2017**, extension material targeting nutrient and sediment retention (such as the tools listed above) will be developed to inform banana growers of the benefits of adopting best management practices;
- **Commencing in 2017**, there will be a biennial review of extension material and techniques used in other industries – to identify possible new extension opportunities for the banana industry;
- **Commencing in 2018**, there will be a biennial review of banana-industry BMP extension material to ensure it promotes current best practice;
- Production of two videos per year to promote innovation and best management practice.



It is important to keep banana growers and other stakeholders informed about the steps the industry has taken, and is continuing to take, to reduce the loss of nutrients and sediments from farms. Consequently, regular communication and engagement with growers will raise their awareness of the water quality issues impacting on the banana industry as well as the Great Barrier Reef. This will include regularly profiling the efforts and initiative of growers who are delivering on-farm best practice and innovation. The ABGC will use a number of avenues to keep growers informed including:

- Workshops;
- Water quality events and seminars
- Australian Banana Magazine;
- E bulletins;
- ABGC website;
- Banana Congress;
- Social media – including Facebook;
- Media releases;
- Local grower group meetings.



The background is a complex composition of overlapping geometric shapes. Large, diagonal bands of varying shades of green (from dark forest green to bright lime green) sweep across the upper and right portions of the frame. In the lower-left corner, there is a triangular inset showing a satellite image of Earth, characterized by vibrant blue oceans and white, swirling cloud patterns. The bottom half of the image is dominated by a large, dark blue triangular shape that points towards the bottom-left corner, creating a sense of depth and contrast with the other elements.

WWW.ABGC.ORG.AU