

# Fertiliser

The use and need for fertiliser is going to vary for different paddocks and districts. In the past it has been observed that sulphur and nitrogen have often been leached from the soil during flood events although this isn't always the case. Additionally, the breaking down of large amounts of organic matter (rotting pastures) in the soil uses a large amount of nitrogen.

Some areas may need soil conditioners like gypsum to help repair soil structural and chemical damage that cause crusting and hard setting soils.

The basic principles of fertiliser application do not change because areas have been flooded. Some of these principles are:

- Plants have a requirement for phosphorus very early in their development; if phosphorus isn't readily available in the soil then the plants will benefit greatly from drilling the phosphorus into the ground near or with the seed.
- Not much nitrogen is required early in the plant's life. Nitrogen can also move through the soil much more rapidly than phosphorus so if you are unsure, you can wait and see before applying nitrogen.

As conditions can vary significantly between regions and even paddocks, it would be advisable to seek information specific to your circumstance on the use of fertiliser.

Consider conducting soil tests when soils are no longer saturated. This will assist you to determine any nutrient changes and the degree of critical soil structural damage; guessing what is required can further damage vulnerable soils or waste money.

On many farms there will be paddocks that have been affected to varying degrees. For some paddocks it may take some time before they can be brought back to a productive level. It would be better in these circumstances to focus on getting the better areas back up and going first.



## Contact us

**For further information or individual advice please contact your local agronomist or a DPI dairy extension officer at the following locations:**

- **DPI Echuca on (03) 5482 1922**
- **DPI Tatura on (03) 5833 5222**
- **DPI Cobram on (03) 5871 0600**

**Authored by Tom Farran, Phillip Shannon, Kevin Kelly and Lyndal Metcalf from the Victorian Department of Primary Industries.**

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