

Hort360 Reef Certification Rules



Hort360 Reef Certification
Rules
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Growcom Australia

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Growcom Australia Ltd would like to acknowledge Freshcare Limited for making the resources available. In development of the Hort360 Reef Certification, Hort360 has utilised Food Safety and Quality v4.2 and Environmental v3 Standards without change.

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Introduction

The purposes of a Hort360 Reef Certification is to provide a quality, credible pathway for horticulture growers to demonstrate their environmental stewardship and industry best practice standards in the Great Barrier Reef catchments.

The intent to establishing a Hort360 Reef Certification is to not add to but align and leverage current systems used by horticulture businesses which specifically provide a water quality outcome.

There are increasing expectations on horticulture producers that they will manage their enterprises to reduce impacts on water quality both on and off farm. This is particularly important for those growers who live in the reef catchments or near other sensitive aquatic and marine systems. The Hort360 Reef BMP module focusses on 4 key management practice areas – Nutrient, Sediment, Pesticide and Water.

It is recognised that the majority of horticulture businesses operate within a food safety quality assurance system/s and that some horticulture businesses also have an environmental systems. These independently audited systems are widely recognised across the horticulture industry supply chain.

Whilst these systems satisfy specific purposes they are far broader than what is required to achieving a Hort360 Reef Certification.

Privacy Disclaimer

Personal information collected in Hort360 is done so in accordance with the Growcom Privacy Policy. We do not share information about you with other agencies without your express permission unless it is necessary to provide you with a service that you have requested, is required or authorised by law, or will prevent / lessen a serious and imminent threat to your health or those in your immediate vicinity.

<https://www.growcom.com.au/about/>

Within the Department of Environment and Science funded project Hort360 Great Barrier Reef (GBR) Best Management Practice (BMP) Growcom is contracted to provide de-identified spatial (paddock scale polygon) data on practice standards and practice change, including quantitative social indicators. For all Reef aligned activities delivered by Hort360 data is captured and reported as per the P2R program protocol using the updated horticulture water quality risk framework, ensuring suitable quality assurance and quality control, by the 31st July each year. The data will be provided to the Management Practice Adoption Leader in the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Prior to the provision of **de-identified** spatial and management practice information to Paddock to Reef Growcom will request you to sign a data provision consent form. The consent form will be held by Growcom. Refer to the Hort360 Reef Certification Consent form.

- Spatial – this refers to a polygon / property boundary and is provided as a shape file to be viewed via mapping software. I.e. ARC GIS, Google Earth.
- Management practices – current practices you have specified when completing the Hort360 Reef BMP module. Currently this will be provided as a **de-identified** spreadsheet with a code link to the spatial component.

Growcom also adheres to the Data Breach policy set under Section 26WE of the Privacy Act 1988.

Paddock to Reef program

Each year the Queensland and Australian Governments provide significant investment in programs and projects that increase adoption of farm best management practice systems. The aim of this investment is to achieve the *Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan's* targets, that:

“90% of land in priority areas under grazing, horticulture, bananas, sugarcane and other broad-acre cropping are managed using best management practice systems for water quality outcomes”.

It's important for Government to know if their investments have been worthwhile and to measure the impact of their funding. So all programs and projects funded to improve reef water quality are evaluated by the Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Program (known as the Paddock to Reef program).

There are currently more than 50 projects and programs that report their impact to the Paddock to Reef program to help the Government understand the benefits of those investments.

What data does the Paddock to Reef, P2R, program require?

The Paddock to Reef program needs to know what has changed and where the changes have occurred. Specifically:

1. Location. What is the location of the farm where the improved practice has occurred? What are the property boundaries? The area included in the report must be the area that is impacted by the improved farm practices. This is needed because the Paddock to Reef models rely on site characteristics like soil type, slope, and rainfall – all of which are location specific. The location is also important to avoid double counting. In some locations where many programs are active, it is possible that farm management improvements could be reported more than once. This is easily avoided when the locations are provided.
2. Improved management practices. The management practices in place on that farm, and how they have changed as a result of participation with the BMP program needs to be included in the report. There needs to be a measurement using dates, as improvement can only be described when there is a record of the farm management practices for at least two different dates. For example, an initial assessment in 2016 may have identified that a farm was *Below Reef Certification Requirement* for one practice. The same farm completes a re-assessment in 2018 which confirms that the same practice is now described as *Meets Reef Certification Requirement*. This is a benefit of the program that can be described.

The Paddock to Reef program does not need a record of all of the practices that are assessed in Hort360 Best Management Practice (BMP) program. Of interest for horticulture are the responses against the Hort360 Reef Certification Management Practices framework (previously known as the Horticulture Water Quality Risk Framework). Currently the Hort360 Reef BMP module aligns with the Hort360 Reef Certification Management Practices framework.

Who can access this data?

A small team of Paddock to Reef, P2R, officers within the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) are responsible for monitoring management practice adoption for the Paddock to Reef program. Only these P2R officers have access to the de-identified spatial and management practice data supplied by the various programs and projects. The data is stored on a secure DAF server, is password protected and access is restricted to those P2R officers only.

What does the Paddock to Reef program do with the data?

The Paddock to Reef program assesses the farm management changes that have occurred at each location and aggregates all of these improvements into catchment-scale models. These models are used to estimate the long term benefits of the changes in terms of reduced sediment, nutrient, or pesticide movement from farms.

The data is fed through an automated process that is designed to detect duplication in reporting over time and overlaps in spatial extent reported from different programs. The BMP standards are then used to develop an assessment of, for example, erosion risk in relation to pasture management, streambank management, and gully management. Comparing an initial assessment, a 'before' state, to a reassessment, an 'after' state, provides an estimate of the extent of practice improvement for a given area.

The extent of the change is then aggregated across all reported programs and reported at a catchment scale as an area managed using best practice management systems for water quality. For example '120,000 hectares of improved practice of erosion risk on 34 farms was identified in the Dawson River basin'.

The individual farm polygons (the shapes describing the farm boundaries) are then stripped of any specific practice data and aligned to codes which instruct the catchment modelling process. These codes represent conditions within the catchment modelling which enable the model to estimate the reduction in sediment loads as a result of improvement in management. The codes cannot be deciphered to reproduce the range of farm practices they represent.

A geographic information layer is then produced which contains hundreds (or thousands) of polygons from the many funded programs. This layer contains only the polygons and their aligned modelling codes. This is sent to the Department of Natural Resources, Mines & Energy (DNRME) who use it in the catchment model to estimate the reduction in sediment load at a catchment scale from the accumulated polygons.

Reporting

The results of Paddock to Reef analysis are published annually; aggregated at a catchment scale into a Great Barrier Reef Report Card. Individual property data cannot be published or made public in any other way. Nor is it permissible to be used by government for any other purpose than evaluating the effectiveness of water quality improvement programs.

For accountability, Paddock to Reef program retains the polygons and catchment modelling codes in a data archive hosted by the DNRME. The information is password protected and access is tightly restricted.

Consent

Hort360 Data Privacy Consent Form

As a participant of Hort360 and located within the Great Barrier Reef lagoon catchment Growcom will seek your consent for the provision of farm management practice change data and the locality where the change has occurred.

Whilst Growcom / Hort360 adheres to the [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)⁷, including the [Australian Privacy Principles \(APP\)](#) (<https://www.growcom.com.au/about/>) and has appropriate Data Breach policies in-place Growcom has certain contractual obligations for the provision of de-identified data to be provided to Queensland Government Paddock to Reef program.

By consenting you are allowing your de-identified management practice information and associated location reference (polygon) to be provided to Queensland Government Paddock to Reef?

By doing so you are enabling the horticulture industry to demonstrate more broadly its achievements and land stewardship via the annual Reef Plan Report Card.

Governance

Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers Ltd (trading as Growcom) is a public company limited by guarantee and formed under the *Corporations Act 2001*.

The directors of the company are elected by members with the exception of one external, non-industry, non-executive director. The Board has nominated sub-committees including Finance and Audit. This committee meets regularly and reviews the company's operations against a structured program which ensures that all aspects of the company's financial and risk management are reviewed regularly.

The company has a formal constitution that governs the manner in which the company is operated and the appointment of directors. The company also maintains a comprehensive set of policies and procedures covering Workplace Health and Safety, HR management, sub-contracting arrangements and project management. These documents are regularly reviewed and updated.

The Growcom Projects team draws on a number of years' experience in relation to the development and delivery of incentive programs, workshop and training delivery, project management and research development. Combined they provide a broad depth of natural resource skills, knowledge and ideas which adds considerable value to the program overall. This provides a broader understanding of Reef catchment activities and develops differing strategies to engage growers, industry service providers and the general public.

Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers Ltd trading as Growcom Australia Ltd has the sole responsibility of maintaining the Hort360 Reef Certification to ensure it complies with minimum standards and continues to align with the Horticulture Water Quality Risk Framework and Freshcare compliance criteria.

Freshcare operates with a range of (7) certification bodies, CBs, which provide auditing services for Food Safety & Quality (JAS-ANZ or IOAS accreditation) and Environmental. <https://www.freshcare.com.au/auditing-and-certification/certification-bodies/>

Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) - <http://www.jas-anz.org/about-us>

International Organic and Sustainable Accreditation - <https://ioas.org/about-ioas/>

Freshcare Rules

Growers and Certification Bodies operating within the Freshcare system need to maintain adherence to Freshcare Rules at all times. Go to <https://www.freshcare.com.au/> and select the Standards tab to access the Freshcare Rules document.

Rules specific to Hort360 Reef Certification

Given the alignment with Freshcare standards it would be prudent for the grower to complete the Hort360 Reef Certification audit at the same time as their Freshcare Food Safety QA and or Freshcare Environmental audit was being conducted. This would significantly reduce costs and effort to compile information.

Auditor technical skills and qualifications

- Certification Bodies will be provided Hort360 Reef Certification system training including updates as necessary to maintain current understanding of the Hort360 Reef Certification.

Hort360 Reef Certification Rules

1. A participating horticulture business can request a Hort360 login, www.hort360.com.au, at any point in time to commence the Reef BMP module
2. A Hort360 Reef BMP module must be completed per nominated property per annum
3. Hort360 Reef Certification compliance audits are to be completed tri-annually
4. Growers need to adhere to contract arrangements as per their Freshcare requirements
5. Hort360 may contact the business directly for feedback
6. Once reef certified the certification body, CB, will provide the business with an electronic and/or hard copy certificate in the format provided by Hort360
7. Fees for audit services specific to reef certification are currently subsidised for the first 143 growers
8. The certification body will invoice Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers Ltd tas Growcom Australia Ltd for the Reef Certification audit fee component

Hort360 Reef Certification granted

Where the enterprise has demonstrated adequate control over the process and the management of the elements of Hort360 Reef Certification CB's may recommend Hort360 Reef Certification.

Audit process

Audited materials can be provided in written / photographic evidence / file / site visit

Businesses are required to contact their nominated Certification Body to schedule Freshcare audits and provide an indication of also completing the Hort360 Reef Certification component.

The audit shall comprise of:

1. Review the Hort360 Reef Certification report
 - a. Review action statement to ensure grower meets / exceeds practice as specified by compliance criteria
 - b. Check date to ensure it was completed within the last 12 months
2. Review evidence provided to satisfy compliance:
3. Completion of Hort360 Reef Certification Checklist within the Forms document
4. CB's to submit the audit report into FreshcareOnline.

Freshcare will provide Hort360 Reef Certification a notification to indicate the grower has met the requirements. CB's will issue a Hort360 Reef Certification certificate.

NOTE: The Hort360 Reef Certification audit reporting will be treated separately. Failure of a horticulture business to not meet Reef Certification should not impact their primary Food Safety QA or Environmental audit process.

Use of Hort360 logo

The Hort360 name and corporate logo may be used by a Participant upon written permission from Hort360 in accordance with the Hort360 logo style guide specifications. Participants must apply in writing, to use the Hort360 name and corporate logo and, upon approval, Hort360 will provide the Hort360 corporate logo artwork for use.

The Hort360 logo may be used by a Participant subject to the following requirements:

- The Participant must:
 - Request permission – reefcertification@growcom.com.au
 - Only use the Hort360 logo artwork precisely as provided by Hort360;
 - Use the Hort360 logo in accordance with the Hort360 logo style guide specifications;
- The Hort360 name or corporate logo must not be misrepresented or used in any manner that could be misconstrued or may be defamatory to Hort360.
- Permission to use the Hort360 logo in any way other than as specified in these Rules must be requested in writing and approved by Hort360

Use of Hort360 Reef Certification Certified logo

The Hort360 Reef Certification Certified name and corporate logo may be used by a certified Participant upon written permission from Hort360 in accordance with the Hort360 Reef Certification Certified logo style guide specifications. Participants must apply in writing, to use the Hort360 Reef Certification Certified name and corporate logo and, upon approval, Hort360 will provide the Hort360 Reef Certification Certified corporate logo artwork for use.

The Hort360 Reef Certification Certified logo may be used by a certified Participant subject to the following requirements:

- The Participant must:
 - Become certified
 - Request permission – reefcertification@growcom.com.au
 - Only use the Hort360 Reef Certification Certified logo artwork precisely as provided by Hort360, incorporating their unique Hort360 Reef Certification Certified number;
 - Use the Hort360 Reef Certification Certified logo in accordance with the Hort360 Reef Certification Certified logo style guide specifications;
- The Hort360 Reef Certification name, corporate logo, or logo must not be misrepresented or used in any manner that could be misconstrued or may be defamatory to Hort360 Reef Certification.

Permission to use the Hort360 Reef Certification logo in any way other than as specified in these Rules must be requested in writing and approved by Hort360

Definition of Terms

Block: An area of land that is typically used to grow horticulture.

Broadcast application: Means application of fertiliser across the entire surface of a block on the agricultural property.

CB – Certification Body i.e. AusQual, Sci-Qual

Fertiliser: Means a product that contains a quantified amount, obtained by analysis, of nitrogen and/or phosphorus.

Great Barrier Reef catchment: Has the same meaning in the Environmental Protection Act 1994. The Great Barrier Reef catchment is the area shown on a map prescribed by regulation as the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

Hort360: A voluntary, industry-led program to encourage best practice.

Leaf testing: Means a test of the characteristics of leaves, analysed by a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) or Australasian Soil and Plant Analysis Council (ASPAC) accredited laboratory, or one holding an equivalent certification

Management zone: A block, group of blocks or part of a block with similar features, yields and management history. Zones may be defined by soil type, topography and other identifying areas that determine management practices, including soil/leaf/sap/fruitlet tests, fertiliser recommendations, sediment, and water and erosion control.

Property: refers to the operational site of the business. Typically encompasses multiple blocks / management zones. If business operates multiple sites which have differing management arrangements these would be identified as separate properties

Soil testing: Means a test of the characteristics of soil, analysed by a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) or Australasian Soil and Plant Analysis Council (ASPAC) accredited laboratory, or one holding an equivalent certification.

Suitably Qualified / Experienced Person: A person who has professional qualifications, training or skills or experience relevant to completing a nutrient management plan. This must include the ability to give an authoritative assessment, advice and analysis relevant to the farm, block and or management zone, using protocols, standards, methods or literature, where relevant.