

SOILpak for vegetable growers

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Foreword

Healthy soil produces enough food, fibre and timber to provide for our daily needs and export to the rest of the world so that we can enjoy a high standard of living.

But Australia's soils are old and fragile and need to be well cared for, if agriculture is to be economically and environmentally sustainable.

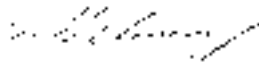
Problems of salinity, fertility, acidity, soil structure, erosion and water quality have led to growing acceptance by land managers, Governments and environmentalists that some agricultural practices must change to ensure a viable future for primary production. This is especially true in vegetable production where the soil needs to be maintained in as ideal a condition as possible for sustained returns to growers.

While this manual concentrates on diagnosing soil problems, its main aim is to prevent these problems occurring. There are sections on managing soil structure, preventing and treating erosion, acidity and salinity and determining how best to apply fertiliser.

Funding for the manual has come from the Natural Heritage Trust, through the National Landcare Program.

It has been prepared by Mr Bernie McMullen, Industry Development Officer (Horticulture) with NSW Agriculture, and Mr Justin Hughes, a Technical Officer with the Department of Land and Water Conservation. Members of the vegetable industry were consulted throughout the manual's development.

I commend all those involved for their thoroughness in bringing together so much valuable information on sustainable soil management for vegetable growers. I am sure this manual will be an essential tool for all those involved in vegetable growing throughout the state.

A stylized, handwritten signature of Richard Amery in black ink.

Richard Amery
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Land and Water Conservation

Preface

This publication is designed to help vegetable growers and advisers make on-farm soil management decisions.

Vegetables in New South Wales are grown on a wide range of soil types under varying production regimes. This SOILpak targets the main soil groups used for vegetable growing and addresses the key soil management problems and strategies.

Farmers seeking to make soil management decisions should use this manual in association with their local knowledge and information supplied by district horticultural advisers.

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