

Farm Operation – Use of Fertilizers

Proper use of fertilizers reduces costs, boosts yield and protects the environment.



1. Fertilizers should be applied only to the required level and at the right time. Excessive fertilizers or application at the wrong time can lead to plant death due to excess fertilizer salts around the roots, causing leaf and root burn.

2. Excessive/unused fertilizers can move through the soil by leaching, be eroded away with surface soil, or washed away in heavy rain, hence polluting ground and surface water.

3. Farmers should, as far as possible, use organic fertilizers, which can benefit long term soil conditions by increasing organic matter content and improving soil structure.

4. Raw manure, human waste or sewage sludge should not be used as fertilizers for vegetable cultivation. Use only aged or well composted manure which has no foul smell and is much less likely to contain harmful pathogens.

5. Natural fertilizers such as livestock manure and other composted organic materials should be checked against possible heavy metal and pathogen contamination before being applied to the fields.

About “GAP- CROP”

The GAP-CROP provides guidelines on local sustainable production of safe, healthy vegetables and fruits. It focuses on reducing the risk of chemical contamination (e.g. by pesticide and heavy metal) at farm level. This article is the fifth of a series of 12 Codes of Practice (COP) making up the GAP-CROP. Farmers may voluntarily follow this COP, identify potential problems in their farms, take appropriate control/mitigation measures, and monitor the effectiveness of such measures.





6. Fertilizer application machinery, if any, should be well maintained and calibrated.

7. Farmers should, as necessary, put on protective clothing/gears when handling or applying fertilizers.

8. Fertilizers should be kept in a dry, clean and sheltered place and off of the ground so that they will not get caught in rain water runoff. Fertilizers should be stored away from pesticides.

9. Harvested crops should be kept away from fertilizer storage areas to avoid contamination by fertilizers from runoff or wind drift.

10. Empty/used fertilizer bags must not be reused for containing seeds/propagation materials or harvested produce.

11. Farmers should maintain updated stock inventory on fertilizers used on farm, and keep records on application details such as dates and locations of fertilizer application, types and quantities of fertilizers used, application methods and types of crop being/to be grown on the applied field, etc.



Next COP:
Farm Operation –
Irrigation

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