

**Lake Okeechobee & Estuary Recovery Plan**  
**Low Phosphorus Fertilizer for Urban Use**  
**November 2, 2005**

Background

At the direction of Governor Bush, the South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental protection developed the Lake Okeechobee & Estuary Recovery Plan. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (Department) was not involved in the initial plan formulation, but was offered the opportunity to comment towards the conclusion of the development process. Significant changes between the initial and final plan versions with respect to urban fertilizer issues include:

1. Removal of a requirement that the phosphorus content of fertilizer for urban use be zero in all cases, and
2. Specifying that the use of fertilizer would be through an urban best management practices program adopted by the state instead of through local ordinance.

The final plan facet pertaining to fertilizer (*emphasis added for urban issue*) is:

**Facet 5: Mandatory fertilizer Best Management Practices (BMPs) (revised application rates for agriculture; low phosphorus for urban use) – complete 2008 FDACS**, in conjunction with Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), will re-assess recommended phosphorus application rates for agricultural crops and revise FDACS BMP rules appropriately. The revised recommendations will be a required component of the landowner's BMP implementation plan. *FDACS will also facilitate the development and use of low phosphorus fertilizer for urban settings in the Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie Estuary and Caloosahatchee Estuary watersheds.*

Facet 5 Lead Agency: FDACS

Supporting Agencies: FDEP, SFWMD, IFAS, local governments

Action Items:

1. FDACS to reassess fertilizer application rates for agricultural crops (with assistance from IFAS) and revise BMP rule as appropriate.
2. Revise FDACS BMP rule to include implementation schedules for the BMP plans. FDACS, in conjunction with FDEP and SFWMD, will monitor and assess BMP performance in meeting load reduction targets and revise the BMP rule requirements as appropriate.
3. *FDACS to facilitate revised fertilizer content standards for use in urban settings in cooperation with manufacturers and IFAS.*
4. *Work with FDEP, SFWMD, and IFAS to make recommendations for BMPs for urban fertilizer usage and content.*
5. Revise SFWMD Works of the District (WOD) rule and basin rules as appropriate.
6. *Incorporate applicable fertilizer BMPs into FDEP BMAPs.*