

Hort 360: *Get on board & reap the benefits for your farm*

Jane Richter

What is Hort360?

Hort360 is a computer based, risk assessment tool, which is designed to give you a 360 degree view of your farm business operations.

Hort360 assists you to identify potential risks, capitalise on business opportunities and highlight unnecessary farm expenses. It is a whole of farm business approach.

Hort360 is broken down into a series of modules which each focus on a different area of farm business and not all modules are relevant to every farm operation.

How does it work?

The program is entirely voluntary and is free for growers to participate in. You do not have to be a member of Growcom or Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers to participate.

Through a one-on-one facilitated process, you will be asked a series of questions relevant to your business. As you answer each question, the system tells you if you are 'below', 'at', or 'above' the industry standard for each practice. If any practice is below the industry standard, you will be advised on what necessary actions are required to reach the right level.

Why be involved?

By participating in Hort360 you will have the opportunity to access technical support, on-farm training, and professional networks. All this will enable you to increase efficiencies, reduce costs, improve productivity and product quality, and build wealth.

There are also a number of government funded programs which require you to complete one or more modules in order to be able to access grant funding or rebates for farm improvement.

What are the benefits?

Increased profitability and sustainability are the major benefits of improved natural resource management and business management. However, voluntary adoption of Hort360 will also help ensure the most effective use of farm inputs and farm resources to reduce environmental impacts, reduce transaction costs, improve public perception of the horticultural industry and reduce the need for regulation or mandatory controls in the future.

Farm Business Resilience Planning and Hort360 Reef Certification are two current Hort360 programs.

Through the **Farm Business Resilience Program**, Growcom is assisting horticultural growers to be more resilient, profitable, and better prepared for drought and our ever-changing climate.

Using Growcom's best management practice program, Hort360, Growcom's Resilience Facilitators are assisting businesses to assess their current management practices to identify risks, solutions and actions that can build resilience and profitability over the longer term.

Growcom has streamlined the process with the development of a Farm Business Resilience Module, risk report and farm business resilience planning template all housed within Hort360.

A **Farm Business Resilience Plan** helps you:

- support the productivity and profitability of your business
- identify and assess risks which will impact your farm business such as drought, natural disasters, production risks
- identify opportunities to improve your business
- develop strategies and actions on how to manage risks and progress opportunities.

To find out more about Farm Business Resilience Program contact the Project Manager - Karen George on 0408 135 003 or kgeorge@growcom.com.au



You need a Farm Business Resilience Plan to apply for drought assistance grants and loans, which in Queensland are administered through Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA).

In Queensland, Primary producers across all agriculture industries can currently apply for these drought grants and loans without needing a drought declaration.

The support on offer includes:

- Drought Preparedness Grants of up to \$50,000 for on-farm capital improvements identified in a Farm Business Resilience Plan that improve drought resilience.
- Drought Ready and Recovery Finance loans of up to \$250,000 for preparedness measures consistent with the producer's Farm Business Resilience Plan.
- Farm Management Grants offer a 50% rebate up to a maximum \$2,500, on the cost of eligible professional advice to produce a Farm Business Resilience Plan for your property.

In NSW, there is a similar Farm Business Resilience Program in operation, but this is not connected to Hort360.

You can find out more about what is on offer at:
www.droughthub.nsw.gov.au/programs/farm-business-resilience-program

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

The Hort360 Reef Certification aligns and leverages off current systems (i.e. Freshcare) used by horticulture businesses to provide a specific water quality outcome. This will ensure there is reduced administration effort for the grower.

For example, growers can be audited against the Hort360 Reef Certification at the same time as they are audited for Freshcare Food Safety QA and/or Freshcare Environmental.

It is important to horticulture growers, with much of Queensland's fruit, vegetable and nut production close to sensitive marine environments such as the Great Barrier Reef, that they manage their enterprises to reduce impacts on water quality both on and off farm.

**To find out more about
Hort360 Reef Certification contact:**

Scott Wallace, Project Manager

email swallace@growcom.com.au

phone 0408 135 002

hort360