



Fertcare Adopts 4R Nutrient Stewardship

We live in a world where environmental concerns and increased food demand create unprecedented challenges.

Fertilizers are essential for sustainable crop production and there is a need to ensure these inputs are used efficiently and effectively to minimize their environmental impact. In response, nutrient best management practices (BMP's) have been developed that seek to address social, economic and environmental goals.

The international fertilizer industry has adopted the Global "4R" Nutrient Stewardship Framework to communicate a common vision for the development of fertilizer BMPs. The core strategy of this approach is to meet sustainability objectives by applying the right source (or product), at the right rate, right time and right place – summarized as the four rights or 4Rs.

As many readers would recognise, the Fertcare training material currently uses CRAFT (**C**hoice of product, **R**ate of application, **A**pplication method, **F**requency of application & **T**iming of application) as a stewardship framework and to assist people cover all the significant aspects of a fertilizer recommendation. In terms of developing and stating fertilizer recommendations, CRAFT provides greater clarity as the "right time" component of the 4R's is further defined by frequency and timing of application in CRAFT. This is particularly relevant in situations where multiple applications are common e.g. horticulture and intensive pasture dairy pasture.

Given the increasingly global nature of the fertilizer industry and agriculture more broadly, the Fertcare Management Committee has recently decided to incorporate the 4R's nutrient stewardship concept into the Fertcare training resources. CRAFT will still be used but targeted more specifically at the development and checking of fertilizer recommendations for completeness. The 4R's terminology will be incorporated into all the Fertcare training resources as they come up for review.

Fertcare courses are entirely consistent with the 4R's and already cover the key information that underpins the concept. Changing the language to explicitly include the 4R's will make it possible to quickly identify that Fertcare is part of the international framework for fertilizer best management practices.

Organisations like the International Fertilizer Association (IFA), The International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI) and The Fertilizer Institute are actively promoting the 4R's concept in international policy forums and identifying Fertcare as a 4R's program will make it easy for us to share the benefits of international recognition.

For more information on 4R, go to www.nutrientstewardship.com. IPNI has recently released a metric version of the 4R Plant Nutrition Manual. This is a wire bound, 130 page book filled with illustrations, learning modules, and case studies. To order a copy, go to www.ipni.net/publications.