

MAKING **BETTER FERTILISER DECISIONS** FOR CROPPING SYSTEMS IN AUSTRALIA



USER MANUAL

MAKING BETTER FERTILISER DECISIONS FOR CROPPING SYSTEMS IN AUSTRALIA



Department of
Primary Industries





Department of
Primary Industries

NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

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Acknowledgements

The database of historic nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K) and sulphur (S) soil test–crop response trials for cereals, oilseeds and pulses established through the **Making Better Fertiliser Decisions for Cropping Systems in Australia** project (BFDC), and the **BFDC Interrogator** tool that was built to query the data, are being used to underpin all FERTCARE® fertiliser recommendations in Australia as *the best available data*. BFDC will also be used in the auditing of FERTCARE® accredited Decision Support Systems and FERTCARE® Accredited Advisors where these provide the basis for fertiliser recommendations in cereal, oilseed and pulse crops.

The user manual was written as part of the project to enable potential users of the **BFDC Interrogator** to understand, develop and use soil test–crop response relationships as part of soil test interpretation.

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Disclaimer

The information contained in this BFDC user manual is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing – March 2012. The information contained in this publication is provided as general information only and is not a substitute for a fertiliser recommendation derived from a decision support system. Users should obtain any appropriate professional advice relevant to their particular circumstances.

The BFDC Database has been created using information provided by third parties. The State of New South Wales, the authors and publisher take no responsibility for the accuracy, currency or reliability of any information included in the Database. To the full extent permitted by law, the State of New South Wales excludes all liability arising from or connected to the use of or reliance on any material contained in the BFDC Database, including without limitation any interference with or damage to a user's computer system, software or data.

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MAKING BETTER FERTILISER DECISIONS FOR CROPPING SYSTEMS IN AUSTRALIA

BFDC INTERROGATOR

USER MANUAL

Instructions for using the *BFDC Interrogator* for examining
State and regional calibration relationships and soil test criteria
for single-year trials

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Geographic Web Solutions

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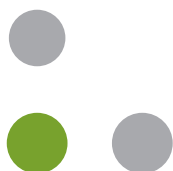
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The Better Fertiliser Decisions Framework
will make accessible all available fertiliser trial
data across all Australian cropping regions.
Its success relies on you.

OBTAINING ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL BFDC DATABASE

To obtain access to the **BFDC Database** and **Interrogator**, users need to successfully complete a training course. Please visit www.bfdc.com.au for more information.

People attending the BFDC training courses will be given a temporary username and password to access the *BFDC Interrogator*.

After completing the course participants need to respond to the automated email they receive for ongoing access. The automated email is initiated through participant enrolment at the training course. Access via a more permanent username and password will normally be granted to those who have demonstrated responsible competency during the training course.



Simon Speirs, NSW DPI

WHAT IS A CALIBRATION RELATIONSHIP?

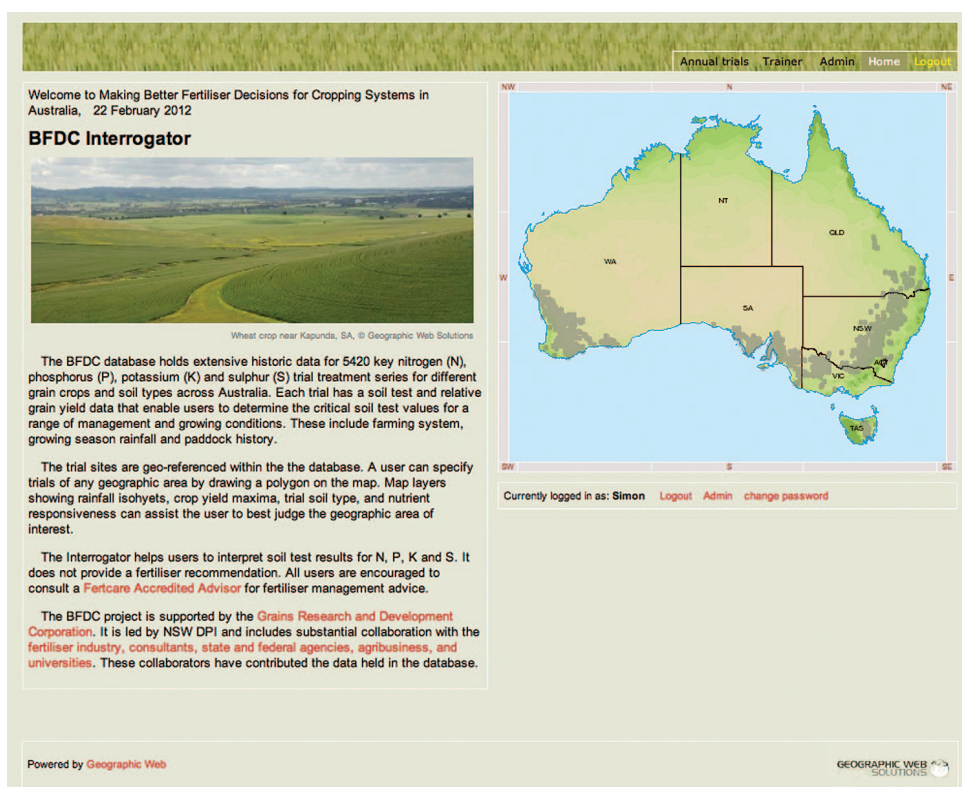
The BFDC Database contains data for more than 5000 soil test-crop response relationships carried out from the early 1960s to recent times.

The *BFDC Interrogator* (see Figure 1) is designed to create calibration relationships between a specific soil test (specified for depth of sampling and reporting units) and crop responses to an applied nutrient. The crop response to rates of applied nutrient is measured as the percentage relative yield (RY %).

Relative yield (RY) is defined as $(Y_0/Y_{\max}) \times 100$, where Y_0 is the crop yield with no nutrient applied and Y_{\max} is the maximum yield achieved in the trial after applying a specified nutrient.

Yield increase can also be shown for a selection of trials. Yield increase to applied nutrient, defined as $Y_{\max} - Y_0$, is plotted against soil test values. This *BFDC Interrogator* option is typically more variable than plots presented using RY %, because growing season rainfall has large and variable effects on grain yield. A critical calibration relationship cannot be determined for yield increase using the *BFDC Interrogator*.

Figure 1. The *BFDC Interrogator* window



STANDARDISATION OF SOIL TEST DATA

For several soil tests, data held in the BFDC Database has been converted to valid equivalents to ensure the *BFDC Interrogator* has the capacity to generate additional calibration relationships or include a greater number of trials in a specific calibration plot. These conversions are defined in Appendices 1 to 5.

INTERROGATION PROCEDURE

After logging in go to the top of the page and select '**annual trials**'. This will take you to the main trial page with a map displaying all trial locations.

Initial selection

The soil test-crop response page enables you to make an initial selection of trials using the search criteria available (see Figure 2, page 9). The initial criteria you specify can include any one of the following:

- **Crop type or types (for example, wheat and/or barley, canola and/or rape)**
- **Nutrient (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium or sulphur)**
- **Season (winter or summer crops)**
- **Farming system (dryland or irrigated)**
- **Soil type or types (Australian Soil Classification)**
- **Year or range of years**
- **Geographic region.**

Remember, the more criteria you set, the smaller the trial set derived from the first query.

You can group soil types and crop types by selecting multiple options in the drop-down menu (hold the Shift or Control key down to select the options you are seeking).



NAVIGATING THE MAP

To navigate the map, draw a 'zoom box' over the geographic area of interest (hold the left mouse button down and drag the cursor across the map). Other navigation tools are available by first choosing from the various options listed in the 'Map tools' drop-down menu located below the map of Australia.

DEFINING A GEOGRAPHIC REGION

Using the 'Draw polygon' tool, you can also select trials within a user-specified region.

To draw the polygon, make sure the 'Draw polygon' option in the 'Map tools' menu is selected. Click on the map at positions that enclose your area of interest (you will probably want to zoom in first). The first 'click' creates a point for the polygon and successive 'clicks' draw additional points and connecting lines.

Do not allow polygon lines to cross over each other. To complete the polygon, simply click on the text 'complete' at bottom of map toolbar (see Figure 2). This will link the first point to the last point.

To clear the polygon at any stage, click 'clear'.

To go back one step, click 'undo'.

Figure 2. Soil test-crop response trials window

Soil test-crop response trials

The database holds 5420 trial treatment series undertaken at 2593 sites. These consist of 1709 N, 2281 P, 356 K and 270 S trials.

Searching the database

Trial sites are plotted on the map as grey dots. Make a selection of trials based on the search criteria below and/or by drawing a polygon on the map around your region of interest. Always begin with a broad selection, then narrow the criteria to search the selection in more detail.

Nutrient: Farming System:
 From Year: To Year:
 State: Season:
 Crop: Australian Soil Class:

Select trials that satisfy the selection criteria above

[clear] [undo] [complete] Map tools:

Optional Layers | Legend

☐ Road ☐ Vegetation ☐ Rainfall

A polygon can be drawn on the map when the 'Draw Polygon' tool is selected from the Map tools menu. When doing a trial selection, only those trials falling within the polygon will be selected. To draw the polygon, click on the map to define three or more points that form a boundary around the geographic area of interest. To complete the polygon, always click the [complete] text below the map. The polygon boundary must not cross over itself.

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Starting the *Interrogation* process

To run any selected query, click on the link (see Figure 2, page 9): **‘trials that satisfy the selection criteria above’** (in red type on left-hand side of screen). A new *Interrogation* form will appear indicating the number of trials that satisfy the initial query parameters and the trial positions will be plotted on the map as coloured dots (initially colour-coded for ASC soil types — assuming your data set has them) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Soil test — crop response calibrations window

[Annual trials](#) [Trainer](#) [Admin](#) [Home](#) [Logout](#)

[<<back](#)

Soil test-crop response calibrations

2281 P trials fit your initial selection criteria. Their locations with Australian Soil Classification(s) are plotted on the map.

You may wish to:

- [list](#) selection summary information
- [map](#) Australian Soil Classification
- [map](#) relative yields
- [map](#) maximum yields

To choose a new region draw a polygon and [refresh](#) the trial selection.

Graph soil test value by:

☒ Relative Yield ☐ Yield Increase

Choose soil test and sample depth:

P Colwell mg/kg (2858)

0-7.5cm(adj.)+0-10cm

View data relationship:

- [plot](#) data by crop
- [plot](#) data by soil type
- [tabulate](#) data

Limit max soil test value: (enter max soil test value for the plot)

Refine your trial selection for determining a data relationship:

- Filter by rainfall, maximum yield, soil pH and/or soil organic carbon:

	Above	Below
Growing season rainfall:	<input type="text"/> mm	<input type="text"/> mm
Maximum yield:	<input type="text"/> t/ha	<input type="text"/> t/ha
Soil pH _{CaCl2} :	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Soil organic carbon:	<input type="text"/> %	<input type="text"/> %
- Filter by any of the trial characteristics below:

Soil texture: Any

[\[clear\]](#) [\[undo\]](#) [\[complete\]](#) Map tools: [Draw Polygon](#)

Optional Layers | Legend

☐ Road ☐ Vegetation ☐ Rainfall

A polygon can be drawn on the map when the 'Draw Polygon' tool is selected from the Map tools menu. When doing a trial selection, only those trials falling within the polygon will be selected. To draw the polygon, click on the map to define three or more points that form a boundary around the geographic area of interest. To complete the polygon, always click the '[complete]' text below the map. The polygon boundary must not cross over itself.

The polygon that defines the geographic area can be drawn in the soil test-crop response trials window before starting the interrogation process or in the soil test-crop response calibrations window:

- In the soil test-crop response trials window, choose the trials by clicking the link 'trials that satisfy the selection criteria above'. This will include only those trials that satisfy the non-spatial criteria and are found to fall within the polygon.
- In the soil test-crop response calibrations window, the initial selection is based on the non-spatial criteria only. This allows the user to make a geographic sub-selection of the initial trial set. To do this, draw the polygon as earlier described and click 'refresh' (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Using the polygon tool in the soil test-crop response calibrations window

Soil test-crop response calibrations

312 P trials fit your initial selection criteria. Their locations with Australian Soil Classification(s) are plotted on the map.

You may wish to:

- list selection summary information
- map Australian Soil Classification
- map relative yields
- map maximum yields

To choose a new region draw a polygon and **refresh** the trial selection.

Graph soil test value by:

☒ Relative Yield ☐ Yield Increase

Choose soil test and sample depth:

P Colwell mg/kg (413)

0-7.5cm(adj.)+0-10cm

View data relationship:

- plot data by crop
- plot data by soil type
- tabulate data

Limit max soil test value: (enter max soil test value for the plot)

Refine your trial selection for determining a data relationship:

- Filter by rainfall, maximum yield, soil pH and/or soil organic carbon:

	Above	Below
Growing season rainfall:	<input type="text"/> mm	<input type="text"/> mm
Maximum yield:	<input type="text"/> t/ha	<input type="text"/> t/ha
Soil pH _{CaCl2} :	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Soil organic carbon:	<input type="text"/> %	<input type="text"/> %
- Filter by any of the trial characteristics below:

Soil texture: Any

Map tools: Draw Polygon

Optional Layers | Legend

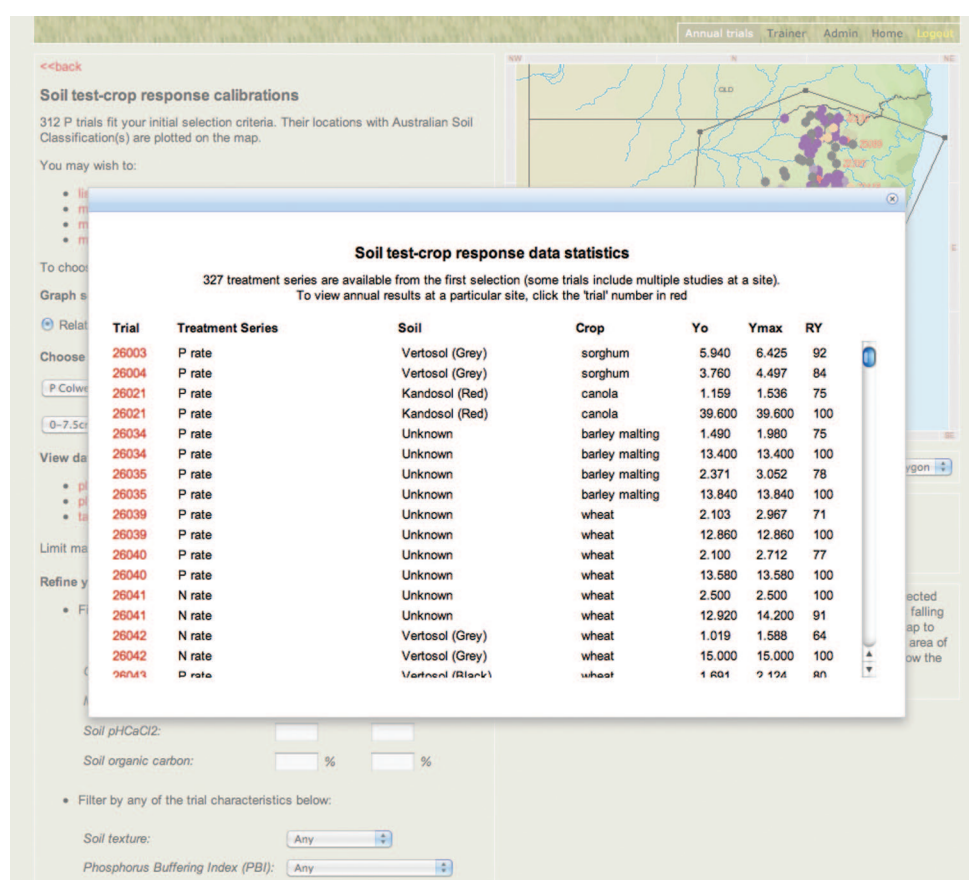
☐ Road ☐ Vegetation ☐ Rainfall

A polygon can be drawn on the map when the 'Draw Polygon' tool is selected from the Map tools menu. When doing a trial selection, only those trials falling within the polygon will be selected. To draw the polygon, click on the map to define three or more points that form a boundary around the geographic area of interest. To complete the polygon, always click the 'complete' text below the map. The polygon boundary must not cross over itself.

OBTAINING A SUMMARY OF TRIAL DATA

To list summary descriptive and statistical information about each trial in the initial selection, click 'list selection summary information' (see Figure 5).

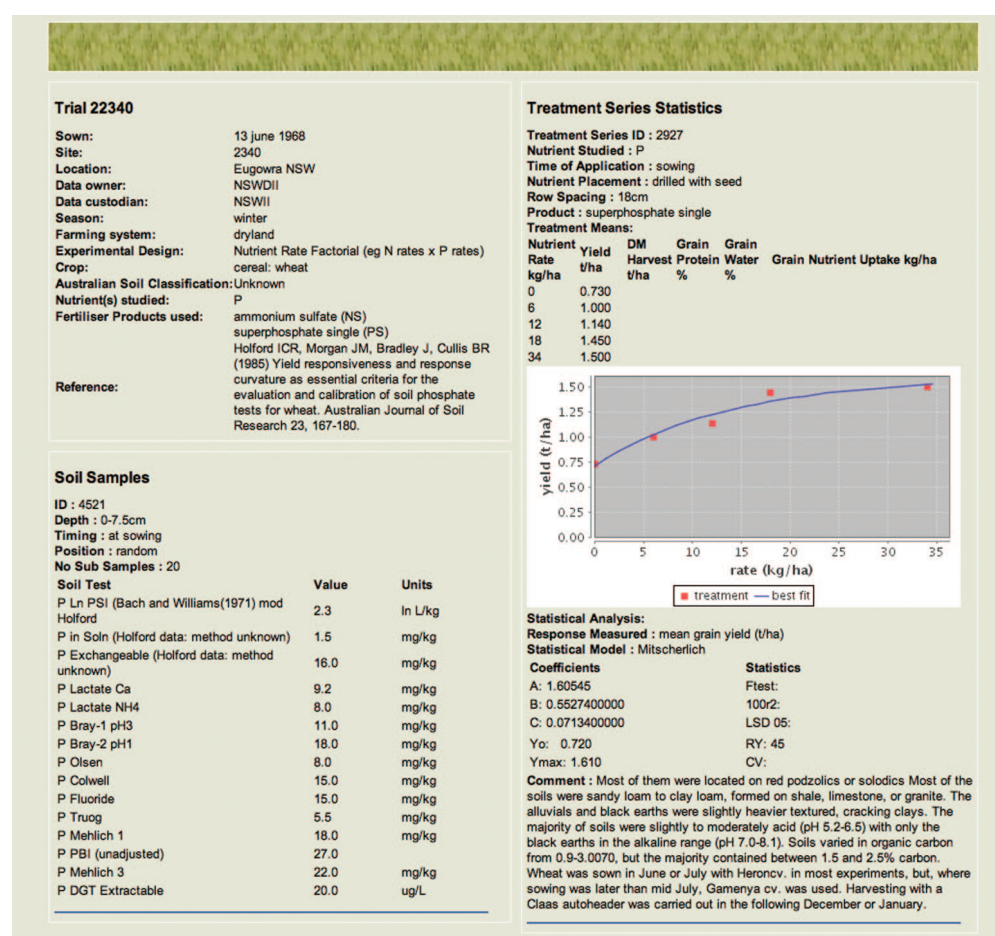
Figure 5. Listed information for soil test-crop response data statistics



VIEWING AN INDIVIDUAL TRIAL

To obtain detailed information about a particular trial, click the **'trial number'** in the summary table (see Figure 6).

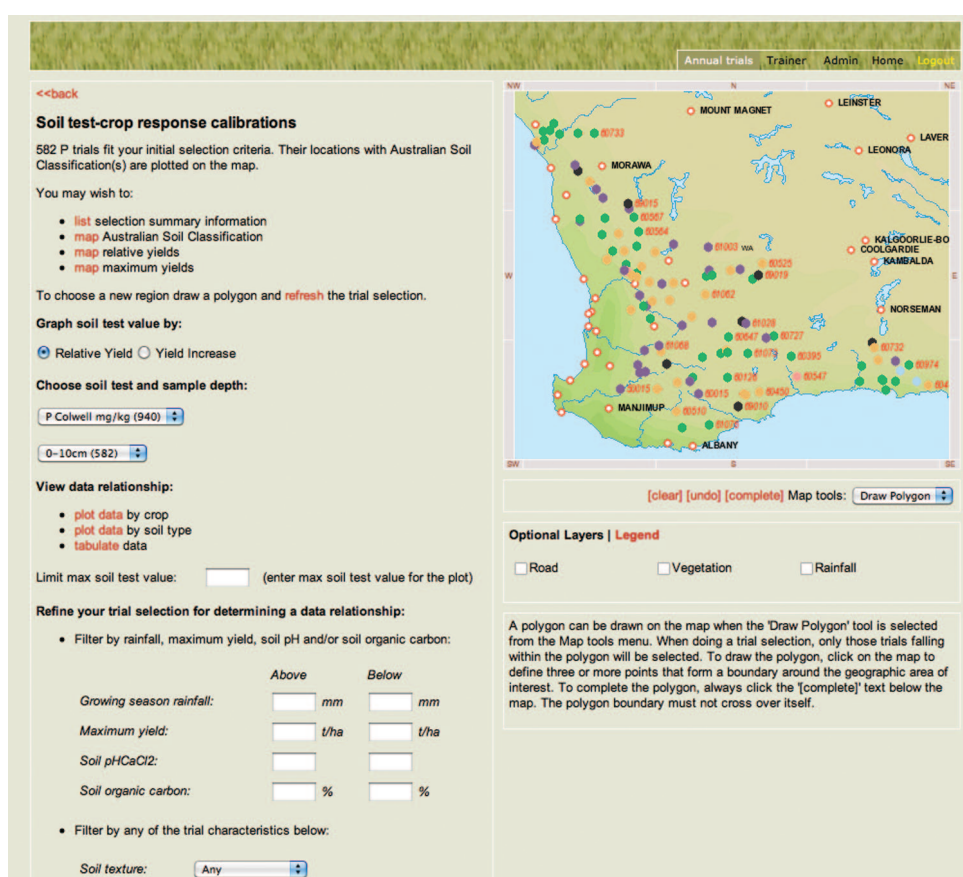
Figure 6. Trial report



MAPPING TRIALS

Clicking any one of the three ‘**map**’ links allows you to plot other colour-coded information about the trials on the map. These include % RY, Y_{max} and ASC (see Figure 7). To see what the colour codes mean for each parameter, click ‘**Legend**’ below the map.

Figure 7. Mapped Australian Soil Classification for each of the selected trials



Developing a calibration relationship

To develop a calibration relationship for trials that fit your initial selection criteria, first select the soil test of interest and sampling depth.

Refine a calibration relationship by selecting filter options in the drop-down menus under the section of the page entitled **'Refine your trial selection for determining a data relationship'** (see Figure 8).

When developing a calibration relationship:

- Always start with a large data set (for example, Colwell P at 0-10 cm) and study the calibration relationship before applying any filters.
- Not all trials include data for all soil test methods, nor do all trials have soil test data for the different depths indicated in the drop-down menu.
- A calibration curve cannot be fitted to yield increase data.

(Continued page 16) ►

Figure 8. Filter options available from the soil test-crop response calibrations window

The screenshot displays the 'View data relationship' window, which is divided into several sections for refining trial selection.

View data relationship:

- plot data by crop
- plot data by soil type
- tabulate data

Limit max soil test value: (enter max soil test value for the plot)

Refine your trial selection for determining a data relationship:

- Filter by rainfall, maximum yield, soil pH and/or soil organic carbon:

	Above	Below
Growing season rainfall:	<input type="text"/> mm	<input type="text"/> mm
Maximum yield:	<input type="text"/> t/ha	<input type="text"/> t/ha
Soil pHCaCl2:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Soil organic carbon:	<input type="text"/> %	<input type="text"/> %
- Filter by any of the trial characteristics below:
 - Soil texture: Any
 - Tillage system: Any
 - Stubble management: Any
 - Phosphorus Buffering Index (PBI): Any
 - Last land use: Any
 - Crop stress rating: Exclude none

Subsoil nutrient effect:

This filter is useful only for K and S trials where soil test data have been collected from multiple depths (e.g. 0-10cm, 10-20cm). Choose a surface soil sample depth and enter a suitable soil test (e.g. Colwell K) above. Below, choose a subsoil sample depth and a value for this soil test (e.g. 25 mg/kg) which represents an adequate nutrient level. Click the 'plot calibration' link below to show which surface samples have corresponding adequate or inadequate subsoil nutrient levels.

Subsoil depth (cm) 0-10cm (582) Soil test value (enter a number)

- plot by subsoil nutrient level

Optional Layers | Legend

Australian Soil Classification

- Anthrosol
- Chromosol
- Ferrosol
- Kandosol
- Podsol
- Sodosol
- Vertosol
- Calcarosol
- Dermosol
- Hydrosol
- Kurosol
- Rudosol
- Tenosol
- Unknown

A polygon can be drawn on the map when the 'Draw Polygon' tool is selected from the Map tools menu. When doing a trial selection, only those trials falling within the polygon will be selected. To draw the polygon, click on the map to define three or more points that form a boundary around the geographic area of interest. To complete the polygon, always click the 'complete' text below the map. The polygon boundary must not cross over itself.

► (Continued from page 15)

Refinement criteria act as data filters and include:

- **Maximum soil test value** (limits maximum soil test value in plot).
Note: One very high soil test will cause other data points in the calibration plot to be compressed towards the Y axis.
- **Growing season rainfall (mm)** (limits plot to a user-specified range).
- **Y_{max} (t/ha) attained** (limits plot to a user-specified range).
- **Soil pH** (limits plot to a user-specified pH range).
- **Soil organic carbon** (limits plot to a user-specified organic carbon range for the topsoil).
- **Topsoil texture** (limits plot to a specific soil texture).
- **Tillage system** (limits plot to a specific tillage system).
- **Stubble management** (limits plot to a specific stubble management system).
- **Phosphorus Buffering Index (PBI)** (plots to a specific PBI range).
- **Previous year's land use** (limits plot to a specific land use).
- **Trial stress factor rating** (excludes data from stressed trials).

Use of these filters is optional. Applying one or more of them will typically exclude trials from a calibration plot.

Note: If a trial report does not include data in a given filter, the trial will automatically be excluded from a calibration plot.

When satisfied with the chosen options, click one of the two 'plot graph' options:

- a) Plot calibration by crop
- b) Plot calibration by soil type.

The calibration relationship (soil test value against % RY) will be displayed either for the selected crop type(s) or soil type(s).

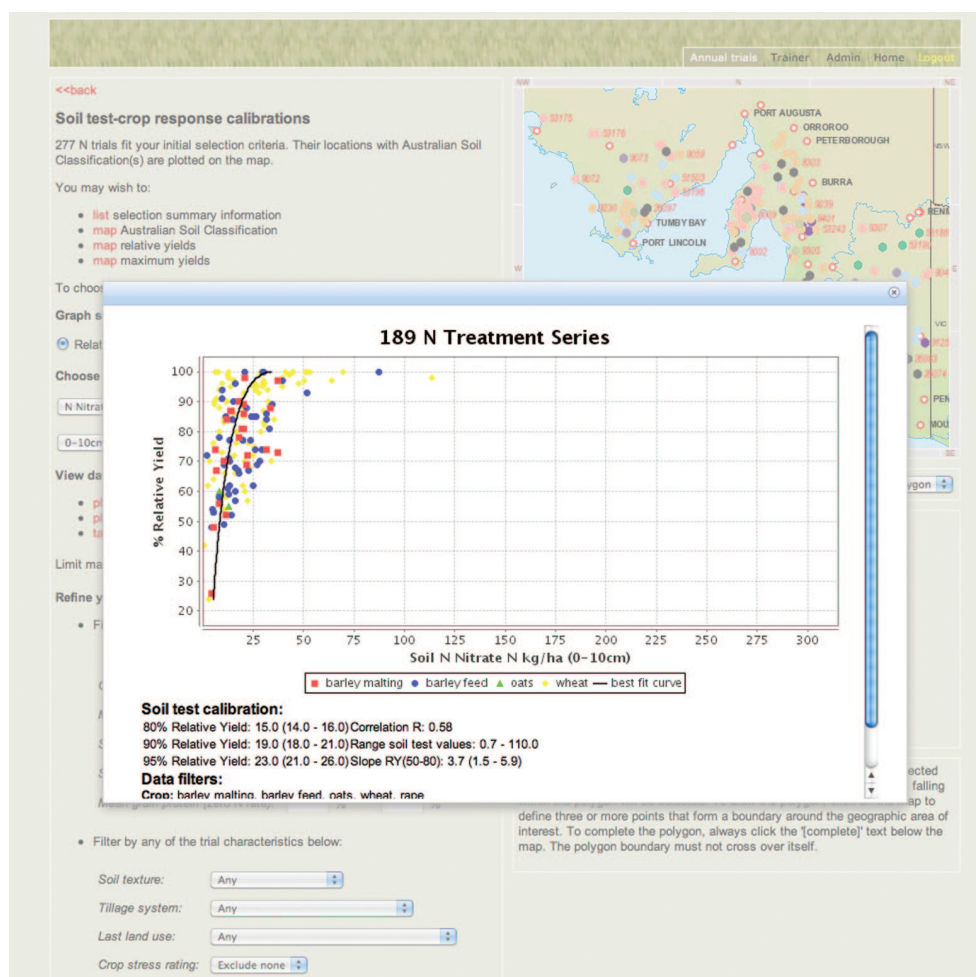


Deriving soil test criteria

A calibration relationship will be plotted by crop or by soil type where the data rules are met. The calibration relationship will show the soil test critical values and ranges at 80, 90 and 95% RY. These will be displayed on the screen with the calibration relationship (see Figure 9).

(Continued page 18) ►

Figure 9. Soil test-crop response calibration relationship determined from 189 South Australian nitrogen treatment series for barley



► (Continued from page 17)

Critical level — the point above which for the level of significance applied, RY is likely to be at least (or larger than) the nominated value.

Confidence range — based on the level of significance applied to the soil test–crop response curve, it represents the range of soil test values for which RY is likely to be at the nominated value. If the confidence range of two different calibrations are discrete (they do not intersect) the critical levels are different. For two calibrations where the confidence ranges overlap to a small degree, the critical levels still may be significantly different, but as the degree of overlap increases so too does the probability of the critical levels being the same.

Correlation co-efficient (R-value) — the correlation co-efficient is the measure of how well the calibration line fits the observations.

Range of soil test values — provides information about the lower and upper soil test values for the experiments included in the calibration.

Slope RY (50–80) — the value and range for this parameter is the slope (rate of change) of the calibration line between 50% and 80% RY as soil test value increases. A high value for this parameter suggests that increases in yield are large for increments of soil test value. This parameter provides information from which inferences about risk and economic gain from nutrient addition can be made. Generally this parameter is of most use in comparisons between calibrations sets.

Importantly, a calibration relationship cannot be obtained if one of the following rules is not applicable:

- a) A calibration relationship must have more than eight trials to be statistically valid.**
- b) A calibration relationship must have an R-value greater than 0.15.**
- c) A calibration relationship must have at least three trials in the 85–95% RY region of the curve. Fewer trials suggest a ‘dumbbell’ data distribution with a lack of data in the area of the most used critical levels.**
- d) The 95% confidence range must be less than half the estimate of the 95% RY.**

You can create a permanent record of your calibration relationship and soil test criteria by printing the graph (click ‘**print**’ below the graph). Selecting this option will present the graph in a format that can be saved or printed from your internet browser.



To develop a calibration plot using another set of trials or using different criteria (for example, different soil types or different soil tests, etc) first close the calibration window by clicking the '⊗' at top of graph window.

DO NOT select the toolbar 'back' button — this will take you back to the home page.

[illegible]

EXAMINING DATA IN THE CALIBRATION RELATIONSHIP

Impact of subsoil nutrient status

This filter is useful where trials have soil test data for multiple sampling depths (for example, 0–10 cm, 10–20 cm, etc) and it is specific to potassium and sulphur nutrient trials (see Figure 10). For example, crops growing on soil with adequate levels of potassium or sulphur in the subsoil may not respond to potassium or sulphur fertiliser applications, even though the surface soil layer itself may be nutrient deficient. You may explore this effect using the input boxes under the heading ‘Subsoil nutrient effect’.

By experimenting with different subsoil nutrient levels, you can discover the subsoil test value above which there is little point in applying nutrient.

To do this, choose a surface soil sample depth and a suitable soil test (for example, Colwell K) as usual in the boxes under ‘Choose soil test and sample depth’.

(Continued page 21) ►

Figure 10. Filter option using subsoil nutrient status

K Colwell mg/kg (1008)

0–10cm (371)

View data relationship:

- plot data by crop
- plot data by soil type
- tabulate data

Limit max soil test value: (enter max soil test value for the plot)

Refine your trial selection for determining a data relationship:

- Filter by rainfall, maximum yield, soil pH and/or soil organic carbon:

	Above	Below
Growing season rainfall:	mm	mm
Maximum yield:	t/ha	t/ha
Soil pH _{CaCl2} :		
Soil organic carbon:	%	%
- Filter by any of the trial characteristics below:

Soil texture:	Any
Tillage system:	Any
Phosphorus Buffering Index (PBI):	Any
Last land use:	Any
Crop stress rating:	Exclude none

Subsoil nutrient effect:

This filter is useful only for K and S trials where soil test data have been collected from multiple depths (e.g. 0–10cm, 10–20cm). Choose a surface soil sample depth and enter a suitable soil test (e.g. Colwell K) above. Below, choose a subsoil sample depth and a value for this soil test (e.g. 25 mg/kg) which represents an adequate nutrient level. Click the 'plot calibration' link below to show which surface samples have corresponding adequate or inadequate subsoil nutrient levels.

Subsoil depth (cm) 0–10cm (371) Soil test value 25 (enter a number)

- plot by subsoil nutrient level

<<back

Optional Layers | Legend

☐ Road ☐ Vegetation ☐ Rainfall

Map tools: Draw Polygon

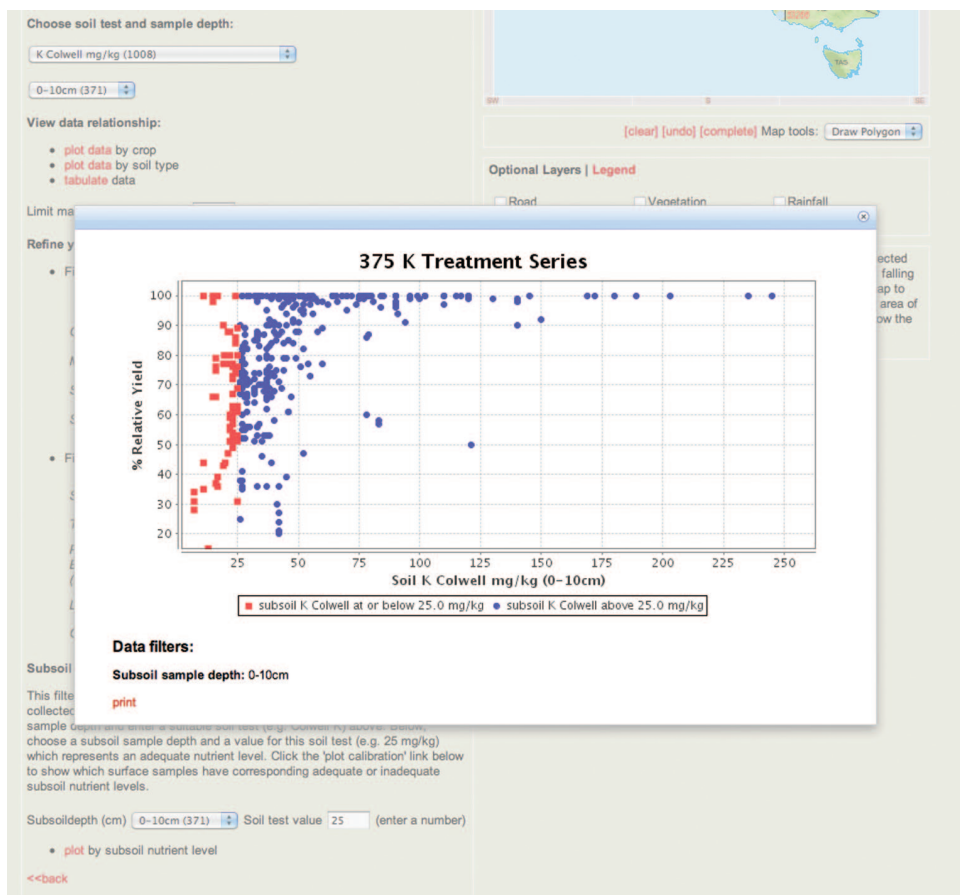
A polygon can be drawn on the map when the 'Draw Polygon' tool is selected from the Map tools menu. When doing a trial selection, only those trials falling within the polygon will be selected. To draw the polygon, click on the map to define three or more points that form a boundary around the geographic area of interest. To complete the polygon, always click the '[complete]' text below the map. The polygon boundary must not cross over itself.

► (Continued from page 20)

Under '**Subsoil nutrient effect**', choose a subsoil sample depth and enter a value for this soil test that you think should be an adequate nutrient level for this depth. Then 'click' the '**plot by subsoil nutrient level**' link to show which surface samples have corresponding adequate or inadequate subsoil nutrient levels. The plot will display subsoil status in different colours (see Figure 11).

A calibration relationship cannot be developed using the '**Subsoil nutrient effect**' filter.

Figure 11. Data displayed using the '**Subsoil nutrient effect**' filter



Outliers

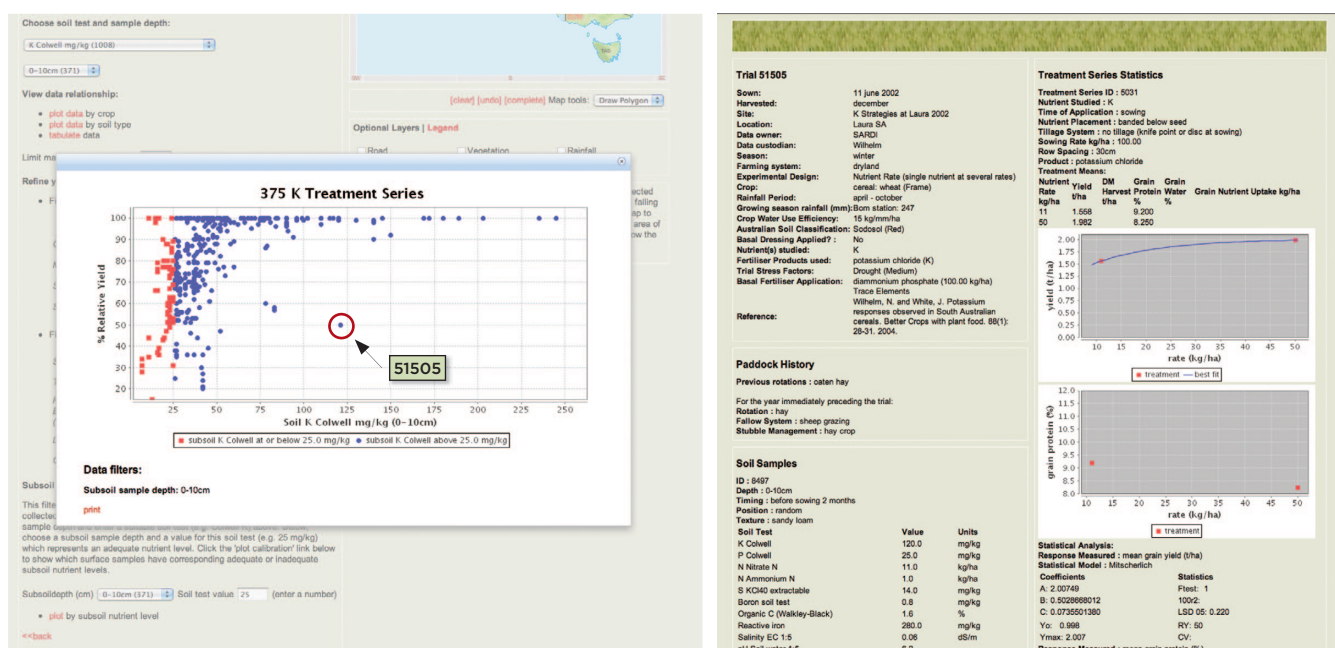
You may observe some trial outliers in the relationship generated. These are one or more data points in the calibration relationship that appear to be somewhat abnormal (displaced) when compared with the main body of data points.

You can investigate outliers by clicking on the data point in the calibration relationship or other presentation of the data (see Figure 12).

The trial report will be displayed and includes all data and meta data that has been entered for the particular trial, including the statistically fitted treatment series graph for crop yield against nutrient rate applied. The trial report will also display the individual mean treatment crop yields.

For trials where data for grain protein, grain nutrient or oil concentrations are entered, these parameters will also be displayed in the trial report.

Figure 12. Displaying trial report for an outlier



By investigating an outlier, you may find:

- The fitted statistical relationship for crop yield and rate of nutrient applied does not seem correct and a different statistical fit for estimating Y_0 and Y_{max} may be more appropriate.
- A crop stress factor (for example, drought, disease or weeds, etc) may have limited yield response to applied nutrient.
- The soil type for the outlier may be atypical.

There is no provision for arbitrarily removing outliers from the plot. If you are convinced any of the trial data should be excluded from the BfDC Database or that some data may require reviewing, then contact us at www.bfdc.com.au

Limited data for long-term trials has been entered into the BFDC Database. All long-term trial data entered is used in soil test-crop response calibrations only where each individual year can be treated as a single experiment.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

APPENDIX 1

Standardisation of soil test values

The following soil test standardisations have been incorporated into the BFDC Database for access by the *BFDC Interrogator*, without compromising the original data.

Converting soil test data sampled to 0–7.5 cm into 0–10 cm depth by dividing the 0–7.5 cm values by 1.14 (Coad *et al.* 2010; K Peverill (pers. comm.). Thus, calibration plots can then be developed for 0–7.5 cm, 0–10 cm (unadjusted) and for 0–10 cm (adjusted).

Converting soil test data from consecutive depths (for example, 0–7.5 cm and 7.5–15 cm) where both soil test and soil bulk density have been recorded for each depth. These provide data for soil tests (nutrient concentration and content) to a converted depth of 15 cm.

Soil test units for soil cations have been converted to mg/kg from cmol(+)/kg and meq/100 g. The latter two units are equivalent.

Exchangeable or extractable potassium (K) (mg/kg) = cmol(+)/kg × 391

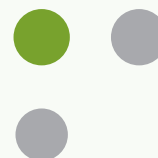
Exchangeable potassium (mg/kg) soil tests have been converted to extractable Colwell K (mg/kg) excluding vertosols with 2:1 clay lattices — see Appendix 5.

Soil pH tests in the National Database have been converted to pH CaCl₂ (1:5 soil:solution ratio) — see Appendix 2 for pH interpretations. Users can specify pH ranges they want to examine as an additional filter for say, interpreting a phosphorus (P) calibration plot.

All historical phosphorus sorption tests have been converted to the modern phosphorus buffering index (PBI) — (Burkitt *et al.* 2002) — see Appendix 3. PBI categories (from extremely low to very high) have also been defined as filters for calibration plots — see Appendix 4.

Soil carbon:nitrogen (C:N) ratios have been derived, using organic carbon (%) and total soil nitrogen (%) soil test values.

Estimates of total soil mineral nitrogen available for crop growth (mineral nitrogen at sowing *plus* nitrogen mineralised during crop growth from organic matter). The BFDC Database contains some estimates for ‘in-crop mineralisation’, either measured *in situ* or via various laboratory incubation tests. For these trials, calibration plots for total soil mineral nitrogen available for crop growth can be compared to mineral nitrogen reserves measured at sowing. However, in-crop mineralisation estimates are integral parameters of fertiliser nitrogen decision support systems (for example, Payne and Ladd 1993).





APPENDIX 2

Soil pHCaCl₂ diagnostic

Soil pH CaCl ₂ ranges	Diagnostic interpretation
<4	Highly acidic
4–4.5	Acidic (possibly aluminium [Al] and manganese [Mn] toxicity and molybdenum [Mo] deficiency)
4.5–5	Acceptable for acid-tolerant species
5–6.5	Optimal pH for plant growth
6.5–7.5	Neutral to slightly alkaline. Often high in magnesium [Mg] and calcium carbonate (CaCO ₃).
>7.6	Alkaline and includes sodic and salty soils

(see Table 7.2 from Slattery *et al.* 1999)

APPENDIX 3

Relationships between PBI and PRI and PBC sorption tests

State	No. soils	Regression	100R ²
WA*	133	$\text{PBI} = -0.013 (\text{PRI})^2 + 2.64 (\text{PRI}) + 15.1$	93
Aust.**	290	$\text{PBI} = 11.63 \text{ PBC (Ozanne and Shaw)}$	98
Aust.***	290	$\text{PBI} = 10.78 \text{ PBC (Ozanne and Shaw)} + 12$	97

Source: * Bolland and Windsor (2007); **PBI adjusted for Colwell P (Burkitt *et al.* 2002);

*** PBI unadjusted for Colwell P (Burkitt pers. comm.)



APPENDIX 4

Classification of PBI status

Phosphorus sorption status	PBI	PBC (O and S)	PRI
Extremely low	<15		<1
Very very low	15-35	<10	1-2
Very low	36-70	10-50	2-20
Low	71-140	50-100	20-50
Moderate	141-280	100-200	50-100
High	281-840	200-300	100-150
Very high	>840	>300	>150

APPENDIX 5

Conversion of exchangeable potassium (mg/kg) to Colwell K (mg/kg)

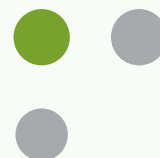
A large body of data from the *National Soil Fertility Project* carried out on cropping soils in Western Australia, South Australian, Victoria and New South Wales (Colwell 1979) were used to correlate and compare exchangeable potassium (Tucker 1974) and Colwell K (Colwell and Esdaile 1968) values.

Overall, the comparisons showed strong linear correlations, supporting a conversion ratio of **1:1**.

No comparative data was available for the Skene K test used mainly in Victoria.

The relationship was curvilinear for some low potassium soils from WA and slightly curvilinear at higher soil potassium levels.

A conversion ratio of **1:1** has been incorporated into the BFDC Database for all analysed soils, **except the 2:1 clay lattice soils**.



APPENDIX 6

Approximate relationship between Australian Soil Classification and Great Soil Groups

Australian Soil Classification (ASC)	Great Soil Groups	Northcote Factual Key
Calcarosols: soils that are usually calcareous throughout the soil profile (often highly calcareous).	Solonised brown soils, grey-brown and red calcareous soils, mallee soils, highly calcareous sands, lithosols, rendzina	Gc1, Gc2, Um1, Um5 soils
Chromosols: soils with a strong texture contrast between the topsoil and subsoil. Subsoils are not strongly acid and are not sodic.	Non-calcic brown soils, some red-brown earths red and brown podzolic soils, red and brown duplex soils	Many forms of duplex (D) soils
Dermosols: soils with structured subsoils that lack a strong texture contrast between the topsoil and subsoil.	Red gradational soils, prairie soils, chocolate soils, some brown, red and yellow podsollic soils, krasnozems, rendzina, chenzem, terra rossa	Wide range of Gn3 soils, some Um4 soils
Ferrosols: soils with a subsoil that contains a high content of free iron oxide and which lack a strong texture contrast between the topsoil and subsoil.	Krasnozems, euchrozems, chocolate soils	Gn3, Gn4, Uf5, Uf6 soils
Kandosols: soils that lack a strong texture contrast between the topsoil and subsoil, having at best a weakly-structured subsoil and not calcareous throughout.	Red, yellow and grey earths, calcareous red earths, earthy sands, brown podsollic soils or lithosols	Gn2, Um5 soils
Kurosols: soils with a strong texture contrast between the topsoil and strongly acid subsoil. These soils can have high levels of magnesium, sodium and aluminium in the subsoil.	Many podsollic soils and soloths	Many strongly acid duplex soils
Organosols: soils dominated by organic material.	Neutral to alkaline soils, and acid peats	Organic soils
Podosols: soils with a subsoil dominated by the accumulation of compounds of organic matter, aluminium and/or iron.	Podsols, humus podsols, and peaty podsols, lateritic podsols	Many Uc2, some Uc3, Uc4 soils
Rudosols: includes soils with little pedological organisation. These soils are usually 'young' in the sense that soil-forming factors have little time to pedologically modify parent rocks or sediments. The component soils can vary widely in texture and depth; many are stratified and some are highly saline.	Lithosols, alluvial soils, calcareous and siliceous sands, some solonchaks, deep gravelly soils	Uc1, Um1, Uf1 soils
Sodosols: soils with strong texture contrast between topsoil and subsoil horizons. These soils are not strongly acid but are sodic and have an ESP greater than 6.	Solodized solonetz and solodic soils, some soloths and red-brown earths	Many duplex soils
Tenosols: soils with generally weak pedological organisation in the subsoil.	Lithosols (shallow stony soil), siliceous and earthy sands, alpine humus soils and some alluvial soils, some terra rossa, brown earths	Many Uc and Um classes
Vertosols: clay soils with shrink-swell properties that exhibit strong cracking when dry. Some of these soils also show gilgai microrelief.	Black earths, black, grey, brown and red (cracking) clays	Ug5 soils

Source: Adapted from Isbell 1996, Peverill *et al.* 1999 and Hall *et al.* 2009.

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