



BACK PADDOCK  
SoilMate

# SoilMate Service Description

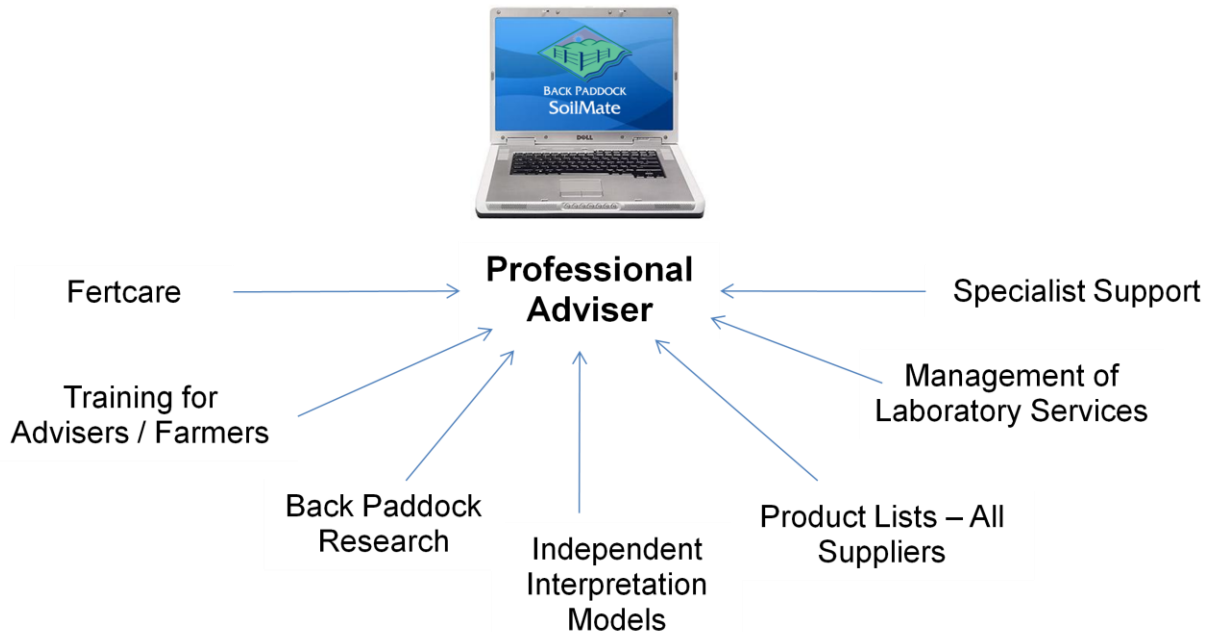
Back Paddock SoilMate<sup>®</sup> is a software and training services package that empowers advisers to provide professional advice on soils management and plant nutrition. SoilMate<sup>®</sup> is a proven and robust software application, a complete end-to-end system, with the application on your PC incorporating internet-based support systems.

SoilMate<sup>®</sup> software saves you time and also helps you to keep your independence; interpretation of nutrient rates, product selection and ongoing access to client data are independent of any other product supply arrangements. This SoilMate<sup>®</sup> Service Description covers 3 topics:

[Quality of Advice – Independent Specialist Support](#)  
[Data Management - Time Saving/Data Control](#)  
[Getting Started](#)

## Quality of Advice – Independent Specialist Support

There are a number of unique aspects to the support provided under the SoilMate<sup>®</sup> service that helps empower advisers to improve the quality of their advice.



## Specialist Support

Using the SoilMate<sup>®</sup> package, you will be supported by a team of specialists in soils, plant nutrition, fertiliser products and agricultural IT. The focus of this team is to improve farm returns through soils management and plant nutrition, rather than sales of a fertiliser product range. We are specialists in systems that suite commercial advisers.

Back Paddock is actively involved in scientific research in plant nutrition and the development and delivery of industry training programs for soils management, plant nutrition and fertiliser application to advisers in Australia.

Our specialist knowledge and ability to put together scientific information on fertilisers and plant nutrition can help advisers to cut-through and assess product claims.

## Management of Laboratory Services

Advisers have access to a choice of laboratories that have been selected and managed by Back Paddock for quality, proficiency and service. Back Paddock is a member of the Australian Soil and Plant Analysis Council (ASPAC)

## Product Lists – All Suppliers

The adviser has access to a comprehensive list of the fertiliser products available from most of the key suppliers to the Australian market. This list is updated on an ongoing basis as products change in the market. The adviser also has the ability to insert products into the product file.

## Independent Interpretation Models

SoilMate® provides the adviser with comprehensive interpretation capability for soil and plant test data by way of interpretative models and tables that reside on the adviser's PC, areas covered are:

- All major crop segments: Broadacre cropping (Winter cereals, pulses & oilseeds; summer grains, cotton), horticulture (trees and vines, vegetables), sugar cane, pastures
- Queensland, NSW, Victoria, South Australia
- Covers essential nutrients and soil amendments

The SoilMate® interpretative data and models are based on the latest data available in scientific literature, combined with practical verification by experienced agronomists on a regional basis.

Being independent of any fertiliser product sales, SoilMate® is uniquely placed to help advisers and farmers better understand the overall economics of fertiliser use, to provide a balanced view of soil health and a recommendation that addresses both fertilisers and soil amendments.

## Back Paddock Research

Back Paddock Company has a strong background and ongoing role in research and development programs that bring the latest scientific knowledge and local experience for ongoing improvement of the interpretative information held in SoilMate® e.g. GRDC Nutrient Management Initiative, Land & Water Australia National Healthy Soils for Sustainable Farms program, the Cotton CRC Nutrition program, Better Fertiliser Decisions program (grazing industries)

## Training for Advisers

Back Paddock Company is a specialist in training programs that work for advisers and farmers in the field of soils management and plant nutrition. Further information on our background in this field is available at Back Paddock Training. The programs are developed and delivered by people who work commercially in this field and are the leaders in their field. The SoilMate® package offers a range of training programs that are of a very high quality and incorporate the latest information from all the leading sources in our industry.

Course Details	Fee (ex GST)	Duration
<b>Better Soil Management</b> Fundamental knowledge in soils, plant nutrition and fertiliser / soil amendment technology; includes understanding the process used to interpret soil/plant analysis and generate a recommendation	\$1100	3 days
<b>Fertiliser Environmental Assessment: (Fertcare Level C)</b> Fertiliser environmental stewardship. How to conduct an environmental risk assessment; sampling	\$600	1 day
<b>Fertcare for Business: (Fertcare Level B)</b> Awareness of key principles in management of soils and plant nutrition; fertiliser environmental stewardship principles; how to take a sample	\$600	1 day

Training in SoilMate® software use is via a Remote Training Manual to enable self-paced learning at a speed to suit the adviser; a user guide issued to enable ongoing refresher on use and use of extended features.

*Training course schedules will be available on: [www.backpaddock.com.au](http://www.backpaddock.com.au)*

## Training for Farmers

Many farmers are seeking more from their fertiliser advisory services. They want to better understand the potential economic returns of one of their most important investment decisions each year, while taking care of the health of their soil in the longer term.

Advisers have found that training for farmers has helped foster a more effective adviser-farmer relationship in this area. The SoilMate® training package addresses these topics as a specialist in the soils/plant nutrition field, independent of fertiliser product sales.

<b>Courses and key Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Fee (ex GST)</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<b>Surviving the High Cost of Fertilisers</b> 1. Use of practical approaches to maximise returns from fertiliser 2. How to minimise risk on fertiliser investments 3. How to recognise good and bad fertiliser advice	\$500	1 day
<b>Understanding Soil Testing</b> 1. Understand how to use soil testing to improve soil fertility and profits 2. How to identify competent soil testing services 3. Learn how to make sense of soil test reports	\$500	1 day
<b>Making Sense of Soil Health</b> 1. How to look at your soil and assess its health 2. Understand how your management practices affect soil health 3. Investigate profitable solutions to improve soil health	\$500	1 day

## Fertcare

The SoilMate® package has been developed to meet requirements for 'advisory systems' under Fertcare Accreditation. Like all other methods for providing fertiliser advice, the SoilMate® system is currently awaiting availability of assessment against these requirements.

Given successful completion of these requirements, the SoilMate® system will provide the adviser with the necessary steps in terms of training and/or assessment in order to readily meet requirements for Fertcare Accreditation.

Our adviser training courses under the SoilMate® package, such as Better Soils Management, have been mapped to competency standard requirements of Fertcare Level C.

Ongoing competency as a Fertcare Accredited Advisor will require a biennial audit of live recommendations. The SoilMate® system is fully compliant with the requirements for ongoing accreditation.

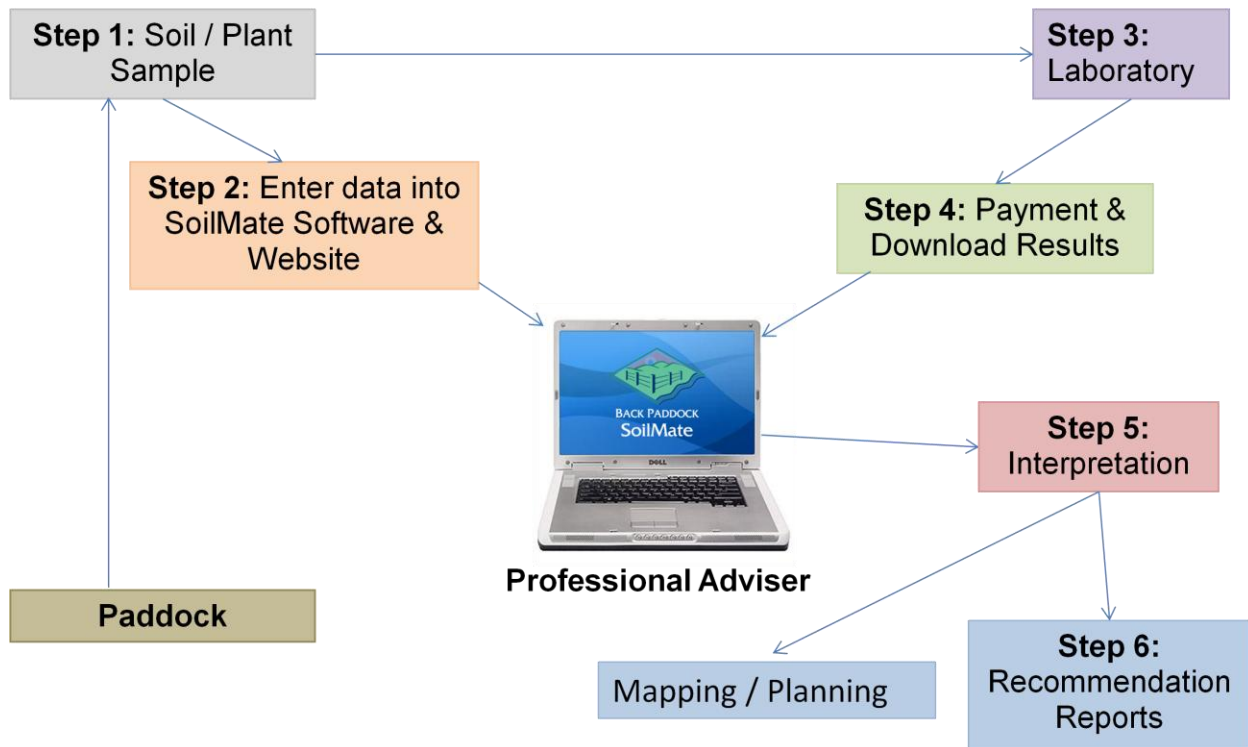
## Data Management – Time Saving / Data Control

SoilMate<sup>®</sup> software provides very significant **data management** benefits for the advisory service business.

The adviser maintains control of all client data (test results, fertiliser programs) in a database on their PC. From this position, the adviser is able to ensure the confidentiality of this data, compared to situations where data is held in a system owned by a fertiliser supplier or laboratory. With this greater control, the adviser can build **quality client data** as an intellectual property asset of their business, of considerable value over time.

Holding data in a database on the advisers' PC enables easier storage, retrieval and interrogation of information over time compared to use of spreadsheets. The ability to readily retrieve data and look at trends over time is important for monitoring changes in soil health and fine tuning plant nutrition requirements.

The use of SoilMate<sup>®</sup> to generate professional advice involves an easy 6 Step process, which is outlined below.



### Step 1: Soil / Plant Sample

The adviser arranges for the soil/plant sample to be collected. It is a critical step for the success of the Investment that sampling is done correctly. SoilMate<sup>®</sup> training sessions for advisers and farmers cover correct sampling methodology. SoilMate<sup>®</sup> has an extensive range of both soil and plant tests available.

Sample bags are available as part of the service, barcodes are also issued so that labelling sample bags is very simple. The sample is sent to the laboratory with a minimum requirement for documentation on the Sample Order Form (barcode sticker, test type required, adviser's purchase order number and email address)

### Step 2: Enter data into SoilMate<sup>®</sup> Software & Website

The adviser pre-logs the sample details into the particular paddock in SoilMate<sup>®</sup> software on the PC, and also logs the basic purchase order details on the SoilMate<sup>®</sup> website.

### **Step 3: Laboratory**

SoilMate® provides a choice of laboratories in order to ensure that the adviser can choose the optimum analysis for a situation, and still link this with electronic data transfer to SoilMate® software;  
A wide range of soil and plant test products are available from each laboratory.

Laboratories currently available:

- SGS, Toowoomba
- Nutrient Advantage Laboratory, Werribee
- CSBP Laboratory, Perth

All laboratories use methodology which can be interpreted for Australian conditions, and all have an Australian Soil and Plant Analysis Council Certificate of Proficiency for the key tests provided under the SoilMate® range. SoilMate® helpdesk keeps advisers updated on lab performance with regular reports on sample turnaround time during peak seasons.

### **Step 4: Payment & Download Results**

Payment for samples occurs on-line when downloading data, by credit card or direct debit.  
Electronic import of laboratory results into the software saves time compared to more manual or semi-automated arrangements with spreadsheet templates.

### **Step 5: Interpretation**

SoilMate® provides the adviser with comprehensive interpretation capability for soil and plant test data, by way of interpretative models and tables that reside on the adviser's PC:

- All major crop segments: Broadacre cropping (Winter cereals, pulses & oilseeds; summer grains, cotton), horticulture (trees and vines, vegetables), sugar cane, pastures
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Despite the comprehensive interpretation available in SoilMate® this step is fast and easy and saves advisers a large amount of time in comparison to more manual systems.

### **Step 6: Recommendation Report**

Developing a comprehensive product recommendation is greatly facilitated by SoilMate® software.

SoilMate® assists the adviser to very efficiently provide a report that addresses all the areas a farmer needs to know in order to use the product to best effect, namely:

- Product description
- Rate of application
- Application method
- Frequency and Timing of application

SoilMate® has a range of report options, including graphic presentation of nutrient status and soil health measures; flexibility to choose either a short report or comprehensive product recommendation

Favourite product recommendations can be readily included, providing the adviser with considerable time savings.

The adviser's logo can appear at the top of the reports.

## Link with Whole Farm Planning /Mapping Software

In order to obtain the best economic return on fertiliser investments, it is important that the adviser understand the overall economics of management options, on a paddock-by-paddock and whole farm basis.

In future SoilMate® will link to mapping and whole farm planning software which is currently the leading farm planning software used by advisers in Australia – Back Paddock Adviser. This will enable the adviser to provide a valuable service to the farmer, presenting the fertiliser program in the context of a whole farm budget showing gross margins and cash flow.

The mapping capability of BP Adviser makes it an ideal tool to support Precision Agriculture programs. Fertiliser programs can also be presented on a map.

These products, plus the exclusive control of your client information means you can build the intellectual property value in your business.

## Getting Started

SoilMate® provides a complete end-to-end system, and one-stop Helpdesk for all software/IT and laboratory queries. **1800 557 166**

On paying for a SoilMate® Licence (as per below) advisers receive a Back Paddock Information Kit with the following inclusions:

- ❖ SoilMate® DVD
  - Latest version of software
  - Case studies for Remote Training
- ❖ SoilMate® Remote Training Manual
- ❖ SoilMate® User Guide
- ❖ Sampling requirements:
  - Sample Order Forms
  - Sample Information Forms
  - Sample Barcodes
  - Soil sample plastic Bags
  - Plant Sample paper bags

## Learning to use the software

The SoilMate® Remote Training Manual enables self-paced learning to get started in use of software. This manual uses a step-by-step approach, with worked examples. The adviser can complete case studies and submit to one of our agronomists for feedback on software use and recommendations. It is recommended that advisers take advantage of this free service when first commencing use of SoilMate®. The SoilMate® User Guide is issued to enable ongoing refresher on use and use of more advanced features of the software.

## Licencing

Licence fee - \$600 per year

Licences are available to Advisers in the Australian states of QLD, NSW, VIC, SA and NT.