# SAVE COSTS & MAKE MORE MONEY



### Content

The diagram below will help you decide how to apply biofertilizer on your farm.



Page number

## A General guidelines

#### **Risk prevention**

- Wash hands with soap and water immediately after contact with biofertilizer.
- Prevent children and animals from accessing reactor and biofertilizer pit.
- Stop all biofertilizer application three weeks before harvesting.
- Do not use biofertilizer as a feed additive for cattle, goats or sheep.

#### **General guidelines**

- Ensure biofertilizer is covered during storage.
- $\circ\,$  Where possible add biofertilizer or compost to soil shortly before rainfall is expected.
- As a general rule, applications of 4-8kg of compost or 2-20 liters of liquid biofertilizer per m<sup>2</sup> can provide good results for most crops.
- If you normally use chemical fertilizer, gradually reduce the amount you use as you begin to use biofertilizer.
- Experiment to find the right amount of biofertilizer needed for your soil and crops -guidelines for crop specific application rates are provided in the appendix.
- Dilute liquid biofertilizer with water (2:1) when planting seeds or young plants and allow two days between biofertilizer application and vegetable seed planting.

## Icon explanation

#### **APPLICATION TYPE**





Seed & Root









CROP

FERTILIZATION I

Pest & disease management

Livestock

Aquaculture

#### **EXAMPLE OF DILUTION**



2 parts water : 1 part biofertilizer

EXAMPLE OF APPLICATION METHOD



2 parts soil : 1 part compost



4 parts animal feed : 1 part biofertilizer

### **BIOFERTILIZER FORM**





Compost

Biofertilizer

#### **APPLICATION METHOD**





Seeds



Shovel





Soil







Pot

**Biofertilizer** 

Cloth bag

Water

M-I-X





## About biofertilizer



- Biofertilizer is ready to use once it has left the reactor.
- However, most crops may require the biofertilizer to be diluted with water before use.
- Liquid biofertilizer can be handled easily using buckets, backpack sprayers, hosepipes and pumps, or irrigation systems. Speak to a technician about the best system for your farm.
- Biofertilizer should be covered while in storage to maintain its nutrient value and should be covered with soil and/or mulch after application to soil.



If you need to store your biofertilizer for a long period of time, composting is the **best solution.** Compost made with biofertilizer also improves yields and soil quality.

Compost is made by mixing biofertilizer with:



\*The kitchen waste should be shredded before adding to the mixture.

### How to make compost?



#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

#### • When to turn compost?

It is best to turn the compost after it has heated up. To see if the pile is hot, insert a stick in the center. Remove it after a few seconds – if the end of the stick feels hot, the pile will be ready for turning in a few more days. Add water if pile is dry.

#### • When is compost ready?

Compost is ready when it is a dark brown colour and smells pleasant. It will take roughly 8-16 weeks, depending on the temperature and how often you turn the pile.

## Application methods

This section provides guidelines on how to apply biofertilizer for soil health, crop development, pest and disease management, and livestock farming.

## SOIL PREPARATION



**Effective soil preparation is the foundation of a good harvest and can lead to:** higher yields and crop quality; improved soil structure and water retention; reduced risk of pest and disease; improved seed germination rate; better plant growth; and increased plant root mass.

This section provides best practices for preparing soil with biofertilizer

in order to plant perennial and annual crops. Choose methods that are most appropriate to your farm and check the crop specific applications in the appendix before applying biofertilizer.

#### **Planting nursery**

1. Pot or seed tray preparation



## Perennial crops (e.g. banana, coffee, tea, fruit trees and shrubs, nut trees)

1. Plantation pits







3 Plant



Cover with mulch

#### Annual crops (e.g. maize, cereals, and vegetables)

1. Covered trenches – best used when soil quality is poor



2. Mix and Mulch - best used when soil quality is good to maintain soil structure



Remove topsoil

Mix biofertlilizer OR compost with soil



Cover with mulch and add water

Plant seeds or seedling

*3. Planting Pits – a good option for maize generally, and also for other vegetables in dry areas* 



#### Sugar cane & fodder crops (e.g. Napier grass/Brachiaria grass)



End of section: SOIL PREPARATION

## SEED & ROOT TREATMENT



Liquid biofertilizer can be used to coat crop seeds and roots before planting. This treatment can improve seedling development and help prevent pests and diseases. This section provides best practices for pre-treating seeds and roots. Choose the method that is appropriate for your farm. Crop specific applications can be found in the appendix.

#### All crops (annuals & perennials)

1. Seed soaking



Leave small seeds in biofertilizer for up to 6 hours, and larger seeds for 6-12 hours. *There are many exceptions to this general rule, so you should check the crop specific application rates in the appendix.* 

#### 2. Root soaking

This application is particularly useful for perennial crops, fodder crops, and any plants that are reproduced without seeds.

Leave sensitive plants for a maximum of 20 seconds. Fibrous plants (plants with tough woody stems and



roots) can be left for up to 12 hours. *There are many exceptions to this general rule, so you should check the crop specific application rates in the appendix.* 

End of section: SEED & ROOT TREATMENT

## **CROP FERTILIZATION**



**Biofertilizer contains a wide range of essential plant nutrients, making it an excellent fertilizer for all crops.** Fertilization should stop three weeks before the crop is harvested. This section provides a range of best practices for fertilizing crops. Choose the method that is most appropriate for your farm. Crop specific applications can be found in the appendix.

#### Perennial crops (e.g. banana, coffee, fruit trees and shrubs, nut trees)

1. Basin (useful on flat ground)



plant, at least 60cm (2 feet) from the base. **Note**: *We dig 60cm away from the plant to avoid injuring the roots* 



Mix soil with biofertilizer or compost. Note 1: Dilute biofertilizer in ratio of 1:1 for fruit trees <2 years to limit plant damage Note 2: Apply undiluted biofertilizer on mature fruit trees (3 + years)





Cover with mulch

2. Covered trenches (useful on slopes)



Dig 60cm x 60cm



Mix soil with biofertilizer or compost



Cover with mulch and add water

#### Annual crops (e.g. maize, cereals, napier grass, and vegetables)

1. Covered trenches



*3. Applying with watering can – best during late stage growth when there is limited space between rows* 



Mix 2 water : 1 biofertilizer



Apply diluted biofertilizer

#### Sugar cane & fodder crops (e.g. Napier grass, or Brachiaria grass)



#### Tea plantations and other dense crops

Due to the close spacing of tea plants, napier grass and some cereal crops, it is often difficult to use the methods above as they require biofertilizer to be physically mixed with the soil.

In such cases, biofertilizer can be applied using a 1-inch hosepipe or poured directly using a bucket. On grass fields, biofertilizer can also be applied using irrigation sprinklers. Alternatively, canals or trenches can be dug to allow biofertilizer to be distributed using gravity or a pump system.

Speak with your technician about installing an irrigation or canal system. Biofertilizer should be diluted 1:1 - 1:3 with water if using these methods in order to maximize soil penetration and avoid nutrient losses.

#### All crops (annuals & perennials)

1. Foliar feeding





Filter mixture

③ Spray



Spray on plants

(4) Stop spraying



During flowering and 3 weeks before harvest

#### End of section: CROP FERTILIZATION

## PEST & DISEASE MANAGEMENT



Liquid biofertilizer can be used as a biopesticide to help prevent and combat pests and fungal diseases. In combination with appropriate fertilization and seed soaking, this can help reduce the need for chemical pesticides. Do not spray flowering crops and stop spraying three weeks before the crop is due to be harvested.

Foliar applications of biopesticide have proved effective in helping prevent and reduce damage caused by a wide range of pests and diseases, for example:

- Fall armyworms
- Stem/stalk borer
- Diamondback Leaf Moth
- Aphids
- Red spiders
- Termites
- Banana Weevil
- Mealy bugs
- Leaf Weevil

- Rice Weevil
- Cutworms
- Tomato root knot nematode
- Soybean cyst nematode
- Fusarium
- Rice mildew
- Rice

- Citrus Black Spot fungus
- Wheat scab fungus
- Banana Bacterial Wilt
- Rice sigmoideum
- Wheat Gibberella Disease
- Moles

#### All crops (annuals & perennials)

1. Biopesticide preparation



helminthosporium

**OPTIONAL:** The foliar pest spray can be made even more effective by adding chili, garlic, and insect repellant plants to the mixture before soaking:

Chop:	Crush 1 handful of:
200g garlic	Mexican Marigold (Tagetes Minuta)
200g chilies	Mexican Sunflower (Tithonia Diversifolia)

**Add:** All ingredients plus a teaspoon of regular dish soap to the biofertilizer sack, which will act as a binding agent.

#### **Biopesticide foliar application**



**OPTIONAL:** if you do not have a knapsack sprayer, you can dip leaves in the biopesticide and use them to drizzle the liquid on your crops.

End of section: PEST & DISEASE MANAGEMENT

## ANIMAL FEED



Biofertilizer can be used to add value to pig and chicken feed and as a feed for fish farming. Mixing biofertilizer reduces feed costs and can improve weight-gain and overall animal health. Biofertilizer should not be fed to cattle, sheep or goats.



Only use biofertilizer from cow and pig systems to feed the poultry and only use cow biofertilizer to feed pigs.

#### Pigs



Supplementing pig feed with biofertilizer can lead to increased weight gain. *Reduce biofertilizer use if pigs experience diarrhea. Do not feed biofertilizer to pigs under 20kg.* 



Supplementing chicken feed with biofertilizer can lead to increased weight gain and egg laying. *Reduce biofertilizer use if chickens experience diarrhea.* 

#### Fish

Biofertilizer is an excellent feed for fish (especially tilapia and catfish) and also increases the growth of organisms such as algae that fish feed on. It is important to properly prepare the pond before using biofertilizer as feed.

1. Pond preparation



2. Feeding

Never use raw manure to feed your fish as it can lead to fish death.





Compost in bags. 100-150 kg per 1000m2



Next to water inlet



Biofertilizer: 0.3 to 0.4 liters per m2

End of section: ANIMAL FEED

#### Appendix: CROP SPECIFIC APPLICATION RATES

This section offers suggested quantities of biofertilizer for specific crops. These quantities are based on experiences from farmers around the world who have benefitted from the use of biofertilizer. Experiment with your biofertilizer and see what works for your farm. Then spread the news and tell farmers in your area!

#### Measurements

To make using biofertilizer easy, application rates are given in simple measurements.

• Quantities of biofertilizer are given as the number of buckets (20 liters) required.



 The space over which biofertilizer is applied is provided in terms of how many steps along the planting row you should move —this is approximately one meter.



 Application rates are sometimes given in buckets per square meters (M2). You can use a bucket (20 liters) to measure a square meter as the following diagram shows:



#### **Drawing guide**



Biofertilizer

Compost

# VEGETABLES

The following quantities are based on farmer experiences growing the following vegetables: radish, carrot, garlic, ginger, turmeric, potatoes, peanuts, beetroot, spinach, broccoli, kale, lettuce, cabbage, eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, chilies, pumpkin, squash, cucumber, melons, zucchini, beans, peas, lentils, pigeon peas, gram and soy bean. Experiment with your biofertilizer to find out what is best for your soil, climate, and crops.

$\frown$			ROOTS	LEAFY GREENS*	FRUITING VEGETABLES**	GOURDS AND SQUASHES	LEGUMES
Prepare soil 2 days before	COVERED	<b>() ()</b> + <b>()</b>	2-3 BUCKETS PER STEP	2-3 BUCKETS PER STEP	2-3 BUCKETS PER STEP	2-3 BUCKETS PER STEP	1 BUCKET PER 4 STEPS
	TRENCHES		1-2 BUCKET PER STEP	1-2 BUCKET PER STEP	1-2 BUCKET PER STEP	1-2 BUCKET PER STEP	1 BUCKET PER 4 STEPS
	MIX & MULCH		2-3 BUCKETS PER M <sup>2</sup>	2-3 BUCKETS PER M <sup>2</sup>	2-3 BUCKETS PER M <sup>2</sup>	2-3 BUCKETS PER M <sup>2</sup>	1 BUCKET PER 4 STEPS
	PLANTING	<b>() () + ()</b>	-	1 BUCKET PER 4 PITS	1 BUCKET PER 4 PITS	1 BUCKET PER 4 PITS	-
	PITS		-	4 HANDFULS PER PIT	4 HANDFULS PER PIT	4 HANDFULS PER PIT	-
SEED & ROOT TREATMENT	SEED SOAKING	۵	20 MINS	20 MINS	30 MINS	30 MINS	UP TO 24 HOURS
CROP FERTILIZATION	COVERED TRENCHES	QUANTITY:	1 BUCKET PER 4 STEPS	1 BUCKET PER 4 STEPS	1 BUCKET PER 4 PLANTS	1 BUCKET PER 4 PLANTS	1 BUCKET PER 20 STEPS
		TIMING:	EVERY 15 DAYS AFTER 1 <sup>st</sup> MONTH	EVERY 15 DAYS AFTER 1 <sup>st</sup> MONTH	EVERY 15 DAYS AFTER FIRST FLOWER	EVERY 15 DAYS AFTER 1 <sup>st</sup> MONTH	EVERY 45 DAYS
	TOP DRESSING	QUANTITY:	-	4 HANDFULS PER PLANT	4 HANDFULS PER PLANT	4 HANDFULS PER PLANT	-
		TIMING:		WHEN PLANTING SEEDLING	WHEN PLANTING SEEDLING	WHEN PLANTING SEEDLING	-
	WATERING CAN	QUANTITY:	1 BUCKET PER 4 STEPS	1 BUCKET PER 4 STEPS	1 BUCKET PER 4 PLANTS	1 BUCKET PER 4 PLANTS	1 BUCKET PER 20 STEPS
	<b>∂+∮</b>	TIMING	EVERY 15 DAYS AFTER 1 <sup>st</sup> MONTH	EVERY 15 DAYS AFTER 1 <sup>st</sup> MONTH	EVERY 15 DAYS AFTER FIRST FLOWER	EVERY 15 DAYS AFTER 1 <sup>st</sup> MONTH	EVERY 45 DAYS
	FOLIAR FEEDING	QUANTITY:	1 BACKPACK EVERY 10-20 STEPS	1 BACKPACK EVERY 10-20 STEPS	1 BACKPACK EVERY 10-20 STEPS	1 BACKPACK EVERY 10-20 STEPS	1 BACKPACK EVERY 30-50 STEPS
	<b>∂()</b> + <b>()</b>	TIMING:	1 TIME PER SEASON	1 TIME PER SEASON	1 TIME PER SEASON	1 TIME PER SEASON	1 TIME PER SEASON
$\frown$				Do not sp	oray crops in first m	onth of growth or	during flowering
PEST & DISEASE MANAGEMENT	FOLIAR	QUANTITY:	1 BACKPACK EVERY 10-20 STEPS	1 BACKPACK EVERY 10-20 STEPS	1 BACKPACK EVERY 10-20 STEPS	1 BACKPACK EVERY 10-20 STEPS	1 BACKPACK EVERY 10-20 STEPS
Carth _	JEKAT	TIMING:	2-3 TIMES 20 DAYS APART	2-3 TIMES 15 DAYS APART	3-4 TIMES 20 DAYS APART	2-3 TIMES 15 DAYS APART	2-3 TIMES 15 DAYS APART
REMEMBER: STOP APPLYING 3 WEEKS BEFORE HARVESTING.							



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*\*Leafy greens include: lettuce, spinach, cabbage, kale and broccoli. \*\*Fruiting vegetables include: tomatoes, eggplant, chilies, and peppers.* 

# GRAINS

The following quantities are based on farmer experience. Experiment with your biofertilizer to find out what is best for your soil, climate, and crops.

			MAIZE	OATS, WHEAT, BARLEY, MILLET	RICE	SORGHUM
SOIL PREPARATION	COVERED		1 BUCKET PER STEP	1 BUCKET PER STEP	1 BUCKET PER 4 STEPS	1 BUCKET PER 2 STEPS
· · · ·	TRENCHES		-	-	1 BUCKET PER 2 STEPS	-
	MIX &		2-3 BUCKETS PER M2	2-3 BUCKETS PER M2	1/2 BUCKET PER M2	2-3 BUCKETS PER M2
Prepare soil 2 days before planting	MULCH		-	-	¼ BUCKET PER M2	-
	PLANTING PITS		¼ BUCKET PER PIT	¼ BUCKET PER PIT	-	¼ BUCKET PER PIT
			4 HANDFULS PER PIT	4 HANDFULS PER PIT	-	4 HANDFULS PER PIT
	SEED SOAKING		8-12 Hours	8-12 HOURS	12-48 HOURS	8-12 HOURS
	COVERED TRENCHES	QUANTITY:	1 BUCKET PER 4 STEPS	-	1 BUCKET PER M2	1 BUCKET PER 4 STEPS
CROP FERTILIZATION		TIMING:	2-3 TIMES 15-20 DAYS APART	-	-	2 TIMES 15 DAYS APART
	WATERING WITH HOSE PIPE	QUANTITY:	-	BEFORE FLOWERING: 6 LITRES DILUTED (1:5) PER M2 AFTER FLOWERING: 10 LITRES UNDILUTED per M2	20 LITRES PER M2	-
	000 -	TIMING:	-	-	-	-
<i>Do not spray crops in first month of growth or during flowering</i>	FOLIAR FEEDING	QUANTITY:	1 BACKPACK EVERY 30- 50 STEPS	1 BACKPACK PER 4-6 PLANTS	1 BACKPACK PER 8 PLANTS	1 BACKPACK EVERY 30-50 STEPS
		TIMING:	1 TIME PER MONTH	2-3 TIME 15 DAYS APART	UP TO 8 TIMES PER SEASON	1 TIME PER MONTH
PEST & DISEASE MANAGEMENT	FOLIAR SPRAY	QUANTITY:	1 BACKPACK EVERY 30- 50 STEPS	1 BACKPACK EVERY 30-50 STEPS	1 BACKPACK EVERY 30-50 STEPS	1 BACKPACK EVERY 30-50 STEPS
		TIMING:	SPRAY CROPS AS TREATMENT WHERE PEST OR DISEASE DAMAGE IS AN ISSUE.			
Ŷ	R	EMEMBER: ST	OP APPLYIN	IG 3 WEEKS BEFORE	HARVESTING.	

# FRUITS

The following quantities are based on farmer experience. Experiment with your biofertilizer to find out what is best for your soil, climate, and crops.

			SMALL FRUIT TREES	LARGE FRUIT TREES	BERRIES & GRAPES		
SOL	PLANTATION PITS		2.5 BUCKETS PER PIT	2.5 BUCKETS PER PIT	1 BUCKET PER PIT		
DAYS BEFORE PLANTING			1/4 BUCKET PER PIT	1 BUCKET PER PIT	1 BUCKET PER PIT		
SEED & ROOT TREATMENT			24 HOURS	24 HOURS	24 HOURS		
	STEM SOAKING		1 HOUR	1 HOUR	1 HOUR		
	BASINS & COVERED	1 <sup>ST</sup> YEAR:	HALF BUCKET PER PLANT (1:10)	1/4 BUCKET PER PLANT (1:5)			
CROP FERTILIZATION	IRENCHES NO APPLICATION LIMIT ON ACIDIC SOILS.	2 <sup>ND</sup> YEAR:	1 BUCKET PER PLANT (1:1)	1 BUCKET PER PLANT (1:1)	<sup>4</sup> BUCKET PER PLANT		
		AFTER 2 <sup>ND</sup> YEAR:	2.5 BUCKETS PER PLANT	2.5 BUCKETS PER PLANT			
		TIMING	ONCE BEFORE EACH SEASON				
		QUANTITY:	⅓ BACKPACK PER PLANT	<sup>3</sup> ⁄ <sub>4</sub> BACKPACK PER PLANT FOR FIRST 3 YEARS THEN, 1 BACKPACK	1/2 BACKPACK PER PLANT		
		TIMING:	BEFORE FLOWERING OR ON FRUIT	BEFORE FLOWERING OR ON FRUIT	AFTER FLOWERING		
PEST & DISEASE MANAGEMENT	FOLIAR SPRAY	QUANTITY:	⅓ BACKPACK PER PLANT	1 BACKPACK PER PLANT	1/2 BACKPACK PER PLANT		
		TIMING:	BEFORE FLOWERING OR ON FRUIT	BEFORE FLOWERING OR ON FRUIT	AFTER FLOWERING		
			BANANA	PINEAPPLE	CITRUS		
	PLANTATION PITS	٢	2.5 BUCKETS PER PIT	1 BUCKET PER PIT	1 BUCKET PER PIT		
			1 BUCKET PER PIT	1/4 BUCKET PER PIT	1 BUCKET PER PIT		
SEED & ROOT TREATMENT	STEM SOAKING		1 HOUR	1 HOUR	1 HOUR		
	BASINS & COVERED TRENCHES	QUANTITY AND TIMING:	0.5-2.5 BUCKETS PER PLANT EVERY 15 DAYS	0.5-2.5 BUCKETS PER PLANT EVERY 15 DAYS	1 <sup>ST</sup> YEAR: ¼ BUCKET PER PLANT 2 <sup>ND</sup> YEAR: 1 BUCKET PER PLANT		
FERTILIZATION	LIMIT ON ACIDIC SOILS.	٢	13 DATS	UAIS	AFTER 2 <sup>ND</sup> YEAR: 1-4 BUCKETS PER PLANT		
PEST & DISFASE	FOLIAR SPRAY	QUANTITY:	1/2 BACKPACK PER PLANT	1/2 BACKPACK PER PLANT	1/2 BACKPACK PER PLANT		
MANAGEMENT		TIMING:	BEFORE FLOWERING OR ON FRUIT	BEFORE FLOWERING OR ON FRUIT	AFTER FLOWERING		
<u>}</u>	RE	MEMBER: STC	REMEMBER: STOP APPLYING 3 WEEKS BEFORE HARVESTING.				

### OFFEE

The following quantities are based on farmer experience. Experiment with your biofertilizer to find out what is best for your soil, climate, and crops.

SOIL PREPARATION	PLANTATION PITS PREPARE SOIL 2 DAYS		2.5 BUCKETS PER PIT
	BEFORE PLANTING		1 BUCKET PER PIT
	SEED SOAKING		24 HOURS
SEED & ROOT TREATMENT	BASINS & COVERED TRENCHES NO APPLICATION LIMIT	QUANTITY:	1 BUCKET PER PLANT
Ŭ	ON ACIDIC SOILS.	TIMING:	ONCE BEFORE EACH SEASON
	WATERING () WITH HOSE OR	QUANTITY:	-
		TIMING:	
Do not spray crops in first month of growth	FOLIAR FEEDING	QUANTITY:	3/2 BACKPACK PER PLANT
or during flowering		TIMING:	EVERY 2-3 WEEKS AFTER FLOWERING
PEST & DISEASE MANAGEMENT		QUANTITY:	32 BACKPACK PER PLANT
	f ULIAK SPKAY	TIMING:	SPRAY CROPS AS TREATMENT WHERE PEST OR DISEASE DAMAGE IS AN ISSUE.
TEA			TEA
SOL PREPARATION	<b>PLANTATION PITS</b> PREPARE SOIL 2 DAYS BEFORE PLANTING		1 BUCKET PER 4 PITS
			1 BUCKET PER PIT
	SEED SOAKING		-
SEED & ROOT TREATMENT	BASINS & COVERED TRENCHES NO APPLICATION LIMIT ON ACIDIC SOILS.	QUANTITY:	-
		TIMING:	-
FERTILIZATION	WATERING WITH HOSE PIPE	QUANTITY:	5 LITRES PER PLANT
		TIMING:	
Do not spray crops in first month of	FOLIAR FEEDING	QUANTITY:	1 BACKPACK PER 30 STEPS
growth or during flowering		TIMING:	AT LEAST 15 DAYS APART
PEST & DISEASE MANAGEMENT	FOLIAR SPRAY	QUANTITY:	1 BACKPACK PER 30 STEPS
		TIMING:	SPRAY CROPS AS TREATMENT WHERE PEST OR DISEASE DAMAGE IS AN ISSUE.
2	REMEMBER: STOP A	PPLYING 3 V	VEEKS BEFORE HARVESTING.





## FODDER CROPS

(e.g. napier grass or brachiaria grass)

The following quantities are based on farmer experience. Experiment with your biofertlizer to find out what is best for your soil, climate, and crops.



**REMEMBER: STOP APPLYING 3 WEEKS BEFORE HARVESTING.** 

### Would you like to be a Sistema.bio/fertilizer champion farmer?

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If you want more inspiration about biofertilizer uses, ask our technicians to share success stories with you!

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