

EW

**FOX ROAD
FIELD DAY
29 March 2023**





Team Work
MAKES THE
Dream Work



HOUSE KEEPING



SCHEDULE

- NT Farmers - VegNET Update
- Netafim – Irrigation scheduling
- James De Barro & Andrew Dalglish – Soil moisture probes
- **Lunch**
- NT Farmers – CEO Update on Water
- Netafim – Automation & product selection
- **Quick break**
- Netafim – Field Walk
- DEPWS – Soil Pit
- **Cold beverages, BBQ, social butterfly activity**

VegNET 3.0 Update



What is VegNET3.0?

- 5-year national extension program led by AUSVEG
- Aims to assist in boosting productivity and deliver the latest research and development on-farm
- Over the next 5 years, field trails, case studies, industry tours, workshops and one on one support will be delivered across Australia with a focus on local industry needs in each state.

NT Focus Areas



**PROTECTED
CROPPING**



**WATER
EFFICIENCY**



SOIL HEALTH



**INTEGRATED
PEST
MANAGEMENT**



BIOSECURITY

What's on in 2023?

- Hydroponics trial in Acacia Hill
- Thailand Industry Tour
- Case studies on composting, IPM and protected cropping
- Northern Food Futures Conference – Tickets paid for by VegNET3.0
- More industry tours!

Protected Cropping Australia Conference Industry Tour

Brisbane, 17th- 20th July 2023

What will the conference cover?

Major protected cropping developments in topics such as pollination, water use, emerging technology and pests and disease management.

What costs are covered?

Airfares, accommodation while in Brisbane and farm tour costs. Conference registration fees are not covered.

Who can apply?

Vegetable growers and industry service providers who service vegetable growers.



PCA 2023
BRISBANE CONFERENCE
17 - 20 JULY



Food Incubator Industry Tour

Cairns, October 2023

- What will the tour cover? 3-day workshop exploring options for value-add products sourced from produce that does not meet markets specifications.
- What costs are covered? Workshop cost, airfares and accommodation.
- Who is eligible? Vegetable growers and industry service providers who service vegetable growers.



All Things Irrigation + Water

NT Farmers Katherine 29th March

- Irrigation Scheduling
- Water budgets

Scheduling

Based in Murray Darling basin – Mildura



Scheduling

To develop a program the following info is required:

- **Irrigation system**
 - Application rate or litres per tree
 - How much of the soil surface is wet
- **Rootzone depth**
 - Depth of active roots
- **Soil Data**
 - RAW
 - Readily available Water
- **Plant water use**
 - Weather data E_{To}
 - Evaporation pan E_{pan}

Scheduling

Application rate

- **Application rate mm/ Hour**
- **= Sprinkler output / (Row sp. x Sprinkler sp.)**
 - **$35 / (6.6 \times 3.8) = 1.4 \text{ mm/H}$**
- **Litres/tree**
- **$9.9 \times 4.9 = 206 \text{ trees/ hectare}$**
 - **$206 \times 70 = 14,420 \text{ L/Hect.}$**
- **$14,1420 = 1.4 \text{ mm/H}$**

Scheduling

- **% of area wet by irrigation system**
 - **35 L/H = 28.2 M²**
 - **6 M diameter**
 - **Area occupied by sp. = 25.08**
 - **100 % coverage**
 - **70 L/H = 38.5 M²**
 - **7 M diameter**
 - **Area occupied by sp. = 48.51**
 - **80% coverage**

Scheduling

- **Rootzone depth**
 - **Usually, biggest influence on soil water holding capacity**



Scheduling

RAW - readily available water

Table 1. Readily available water (mm/cm) stored between –8 and –1500 kPa

Texture grade	Soil water deficit (mm/cm)				
	–8 to –20 (kPa)	–8 to –40 (kPa)	–8 to –60 (kPa)	–8 to –200 (kPa)	–8 to –1500 (kPa)
sand (S)	0.33	0.36	0.38	0.40	0.62
loamy sand (LS)	0.45	0.52	0.55	0.58	0.87
clayey sand (CS)*	–	0.55	0.60	0.64	1.00
sandy loam (SL)	0.46	0.59	0.65	0.70	1.15
light sandy clay loam (LSCL)	0.45	0.65	0.74	1.03	1.37
loam (L)	–	0.69	0.84	1.00	2.43
sandy clay loam (SCL)	0.39	0.61	0.71	1.01	1.44
clay loam (CL)	0.30	0.53	0.65	0.73	1.48
clays (SC, LC, LMC, MC)	0.27	0.46	0.57	0.66	1.49
heavy clay (HC)**	–	0.25	0.41	0.49	1.20

* Interpolated value ** Samples from Kununurra, WA

Source: K. G. Wetherby, soil survey and land use specialist. This table is the result of detailed field and laboratory studies on 360 samples from the Murray Mallee and Barossa Valley in South Australia.

Scheduling



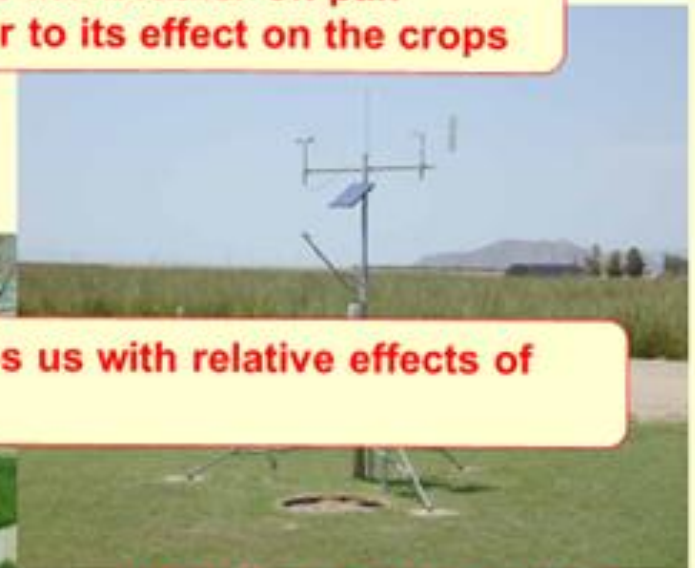
- Plant water use
- Evaporation data
 - $E_{\text{pan}} \times C_f$
- Weather station
 - $E_{\text{to}} \times K_c$

It is assumed that the effect of the weather on pan evaporation and ETp is similar to its effect on the crops

Evaporation pan



The ETp and Epan provides us with relative effects of the weather.



Weather station

We calculate the effect of the weather on evapotranspiration (ETp) of a reference crop

Scheduling



Plant water use - weather data - BOM

Tindal RAAF - March 2023 daily calculations

Date	Evapotranspiration (mm) 0000-2400	Rain (mm) 0900-0900	Pan Evaporation (mm) 0900-0900	Max Temp	Min Temp	Max Rel Hum (%)	Min Rel Hum (%)	Average 10m Wind Speed (m/sec)	Solar Radiation (MJ/sq m)
01/03/2023	4.2	6.0		31.2	24.9	91	64	5.70	12.92
02/03/2023	4.1	8.0		30.1	24.5	96	71	5.02	16.82
03/03/2023	3.8	16.4		29.3	22.9	97	66	3.78	15.28
04/03/2023	5.4	0.4		32.4	22.7	91	52	3.59	21.02
05/03/2023	7.0	0.0		35.6	25.6	87	37	4.00	23.78
06/03/2023	4.7	2.2		32.8	24.1	97	58	3.08	18.48
07/03/2023	6.0	29.8		33.9	22.4	97	53	3.67	24.86
08/03/2023	4.4	0.0		33.4	23.9	94	60	4.09	14.68
09/03/2023	4.7	10.2		33.5	22.1	95	50	1.18	21.65
10/03/2023	6.0	0.0		34.1	21.0	96	25	1.63	27.15
11/03/2023	5.3	0.0		34.7	17.7	93	22	0.90	27.08
12/03/2023	5.6	0.0		35.5	19.5	92	34	1.16	26.86
13/03/2023	6.1	0.0		35.8	22.8	91	36	1.81	26.22
14/03/2023	6.1	0.0		35.2	25.8	87	48	3.06	23.39
15/03/2023	6.5	0.0		35.0	24.2	94	40	2.88	26.05
16/03/2023	5.9	0.0		35.8	23.5	91	40	1.56	26.02
17/03/2023	5.8	0.0		36.4	23.6	91	37	1.45	25.58
18/03/2023	6.0	0.0		36.1	23.6	91	41	1.93	25.29
19/03/2023	6.4	0.0		34.9	23.6	87	41	2.89	25.23
20/03/2023	6.4	0.0		34.6	22.4	93	44	3.60	25.31
21/03/2023	6.3	0.0		34.2	23.9	90	47	3.89	23.77
22/03/2023	6.6	0.0		35.7	24.0	89	39	3.36	24.81
23/03/2023	5.7	0.4		35.7	23.3	93	38	2.02	23.54
24/03/2023	6.2	0.0		35.7	23.3	93	41	2.72	24.73
25/03/2023	6.7	0.0		35.6	25.5	84	39	3.27	25.27
Totals:	141.9	73.4							

Scheduling

- **Putting it all together**
 - **Moisture held in root zone**
 - **RAW -8 to -40 kPa (Sandy clay loam)**
 - **0.61 mm/cm**
 - **Rootzone depth**
 - **50 cm**
 - **$0.61 \times 50 = 30.5 \text{ mm}$**
 - **Wetted %**
 - **35 L/H, $6.6 \times 3.8 = \text{full coverage}$**
 - **70 L/H, $9.9 \times 4.9 = 80 \text{ \% coverage}$**
 - **RAW**
 - **$35 \text{ L/H} = 30.5 \text{ mm}$**
 - **$70 \text{ L/H} = 30.5 \times 0.8 = 24.4 \text{ mm}$**

Scheduling

- **Putting it all together**
 - **RAW -8 to -40 kPa**
 - **35 L/H = 30.5 mm**
 - **70 L/H = 24.4 mm**
 - **Irrigation run time**
 - **$30.5 / 1.4 = 22$ Hour**
 - **$24.4 / 1.4 = 17.5$ Hours**
 - **Days between irrigation**
 - **Assume $E_t_c = 6$ mm/Day**
 - **$E_{tc} = E_{to} \times K_c = 6 \times 0.7 = 4.2$ mm / Day**
 - **35 L/H sprinkler**
 - **$30.5 / 6 = 5$ Days**
 - **70 L/H sprinkler**
 - **$24.4 / 6 = 4$ Days**

Developing a water budget

- **Monthly climatic data**
 - **Average monthly Eto**
 - **BOM**
 - **Silo**
 - **IBM weather**
 - **Average monthly Rainfall**
- **Crop coefficient Kc**

Developing a water budget



Sample water Budget

Sample Mango Water Budget												
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	October	Nov.	Dec.
Average daily Eto mm	7.2	6.7	6.5	6.4	6.2	5.9	5.9	6.4	7.3	7.2	8.6	5.5
Average daily rainfall mm	5.5	4.8	1.8	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.7	2.8	10.2
Eto - rainfall mm	1.7	1.9	4.7	5.7	5.9	5.9	5.9	6.4	7.1	6.6	5.8	0.0
Kc*	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60
Ave. Irrigation mm/Day	0.7	0.7	1.8	2.2	4.7	4.7	4.7	5.1	4.3	3.9	3.5	0.0

Note

* Ref- : Australian Mangos Irrigation based on evapotranspiration

A large, solid blue water drop shape that serves as a background for the text. The background of the entire slide is a photograph of a mango tree with green leaves and ripening mangoes in shades of red and orange.

QUESTIONS?

SOIL MOISTURE MONITORING AND IRRIGATION SCHEDULING




Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment**



**Future
Drought
Fund**



OVERVIEW

- **BACKGROUND**
 - **CONTEXT**
 - **WHAT IS SOIL MOISTURE MONITORING?**
 - **WHAT IS IRRIGATION SCHEDULING?**
 - **CASE STUDIES**
- 

BACKGROUND

➤ JAMES DE BARRO

- WHO AM I?
- WHERE AM I BASED?
- HOW AM I INVOLVED IN SOIL MOISTURE MONITORING?
 - COMMERCIAL
 - RESEARCH
 - POLICY
- WHY AM I HERE?

CONTEXT

- **WA AND NT SINCE 2008**
- **RANGE OF CROPS/PLANTATIONS**
- **SERVICE AND SUPPORT**
- **NT FARMERS SOIL MOISTURE MONITORING PROJECT**
 - **PROBES AND WEATHER STATIONS**
 - **EDUCATION**
 - **SUPPORT**

WHAT'S NEXT?

- **WHY USE A MOISTURE MONITORING TOOL?**
- **WHAT TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE?**
- **WHO SUPPORTS THE TOOLS?**
- **WHO SUPPORTS THE USER?**
- **WHICH TOOL TO USE?**
- **HOW ARE THEY INSTALLED?**
- **HOW ARE THE TOOLS USED?**

WHY USE A MONITORING TOOL?

- **IRRIGATION SCHEDULING**
 - **\$/ML APPLIED**
 - **QUANTITY**
 - **QUALITY**
- **DRYLAND OR IRRIGATION**
- **OPTIMISE CAPITAL INVESTMENT**
- **NOT AN OPTIONAL EXTRA**
- **SO WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT?**
 - **AMONGST LOTS OF OPTIONS AND CHOICES ITS U**

NEUTRON PROBE

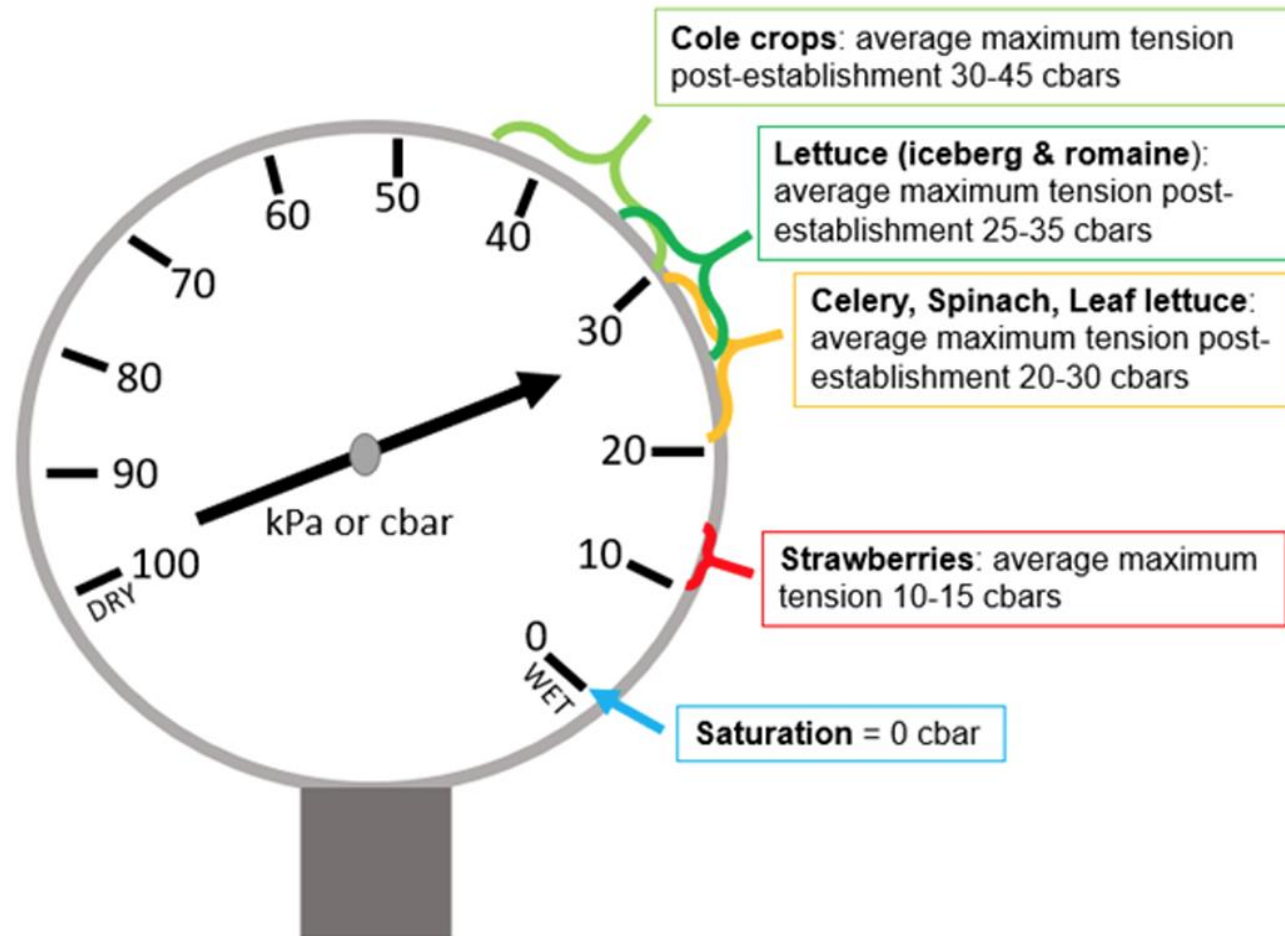


**WATER POTENTIAL –
SUCTION PRESSURE**

**TENSIONMETER
GYPSUM BLOCK**



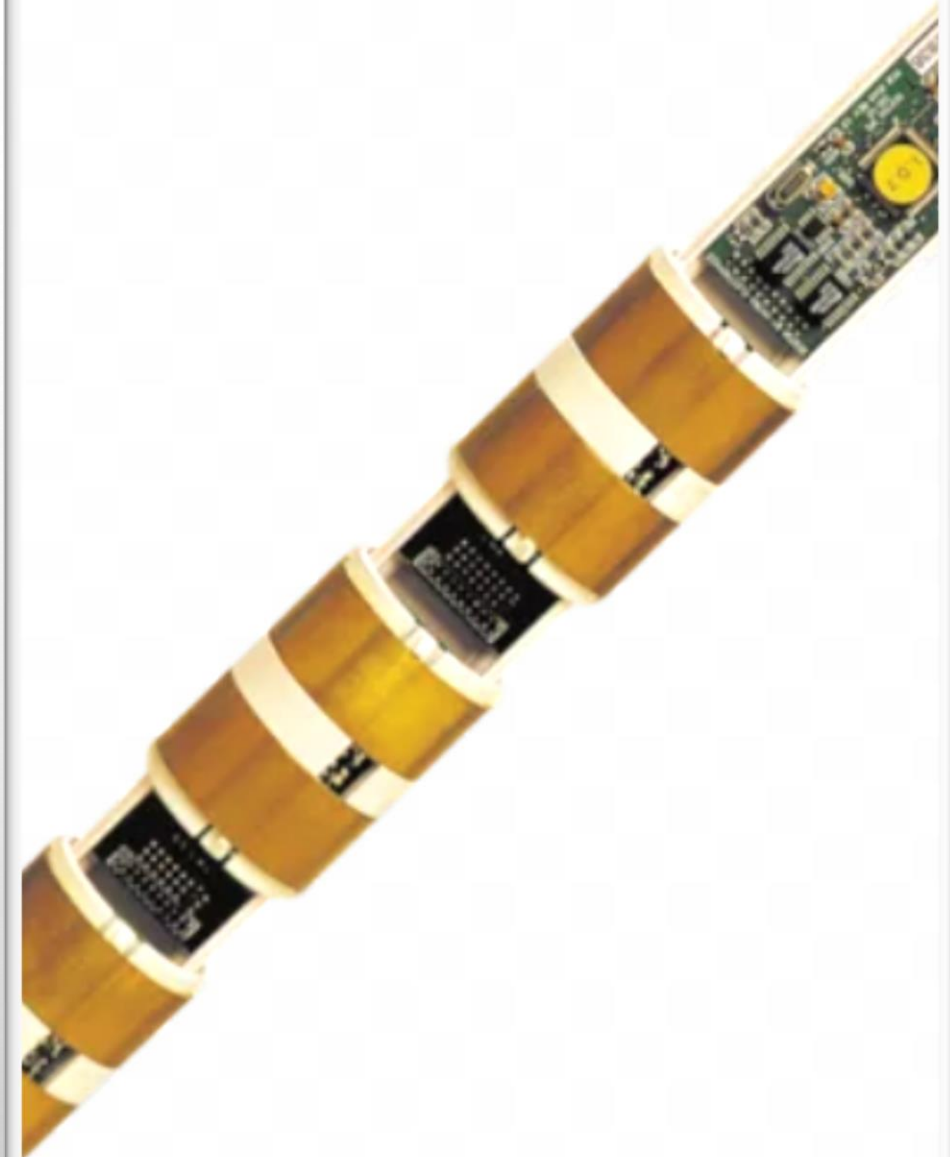
TENSIONMETER



WATER CONTENT

CAPACITANCE PROBE

TDR





WHO SUPPORTS THE TOOLS?

WHO SUPPORTS THE USER?



WHICH TOOL TO USE?

- **WHO BEFORE WHAT**
 - **WHAT DO I THINK I NEED?**
 - **MANUAL OR CONTINUOUS?**
 - **ME OR THEM INSTALLATION?**
- **CROP AND SOIL TYPE**
 - **BURIED OR ABOVE GROUND**
- **IRRIGATION SYSTEM**
- **LABOUR SOURCE – AM I HERE OR THERE?**
- **COMMUNICATION METHOD**
 - **CELLULAR, RADIO, WIFI, SATELLITE, PHYSICAL OR BLUETOOTH CONNECTION**

METHOD OF INSTALLATION

- **IS IT IMPORTANT?**
 - **DOES IT IMPACT DATA?**
- **ANY TOOLS REQUIRED?**
- **ANY SKILL REQUIRED?**
- **DO I NEED TO ADD STUFF?**
 - **SLURRY?**
- **WHAT ABOUT CABLES/WIRING**
 - **VERMIN ISSUES?**
 - **WEATHER ISSUES?**



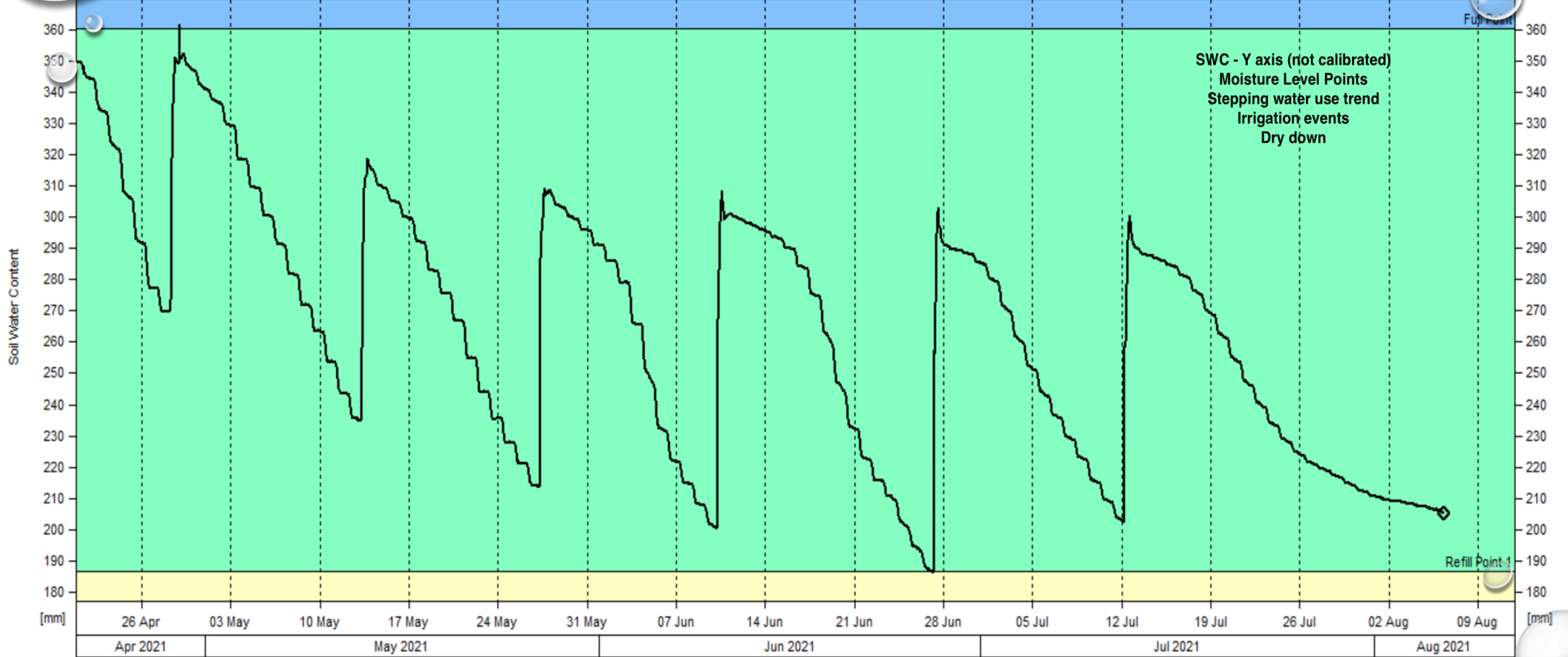
SOIL MOISTURE DATA

- **THE MOST IMPORTANT BIT**
 - **EASE TO ATTAIN**
 - **STRAIGHT FORWARD TO WORK WITH**
 - **UNCOMPLICATED TO INTERPRET AND USE**
- 

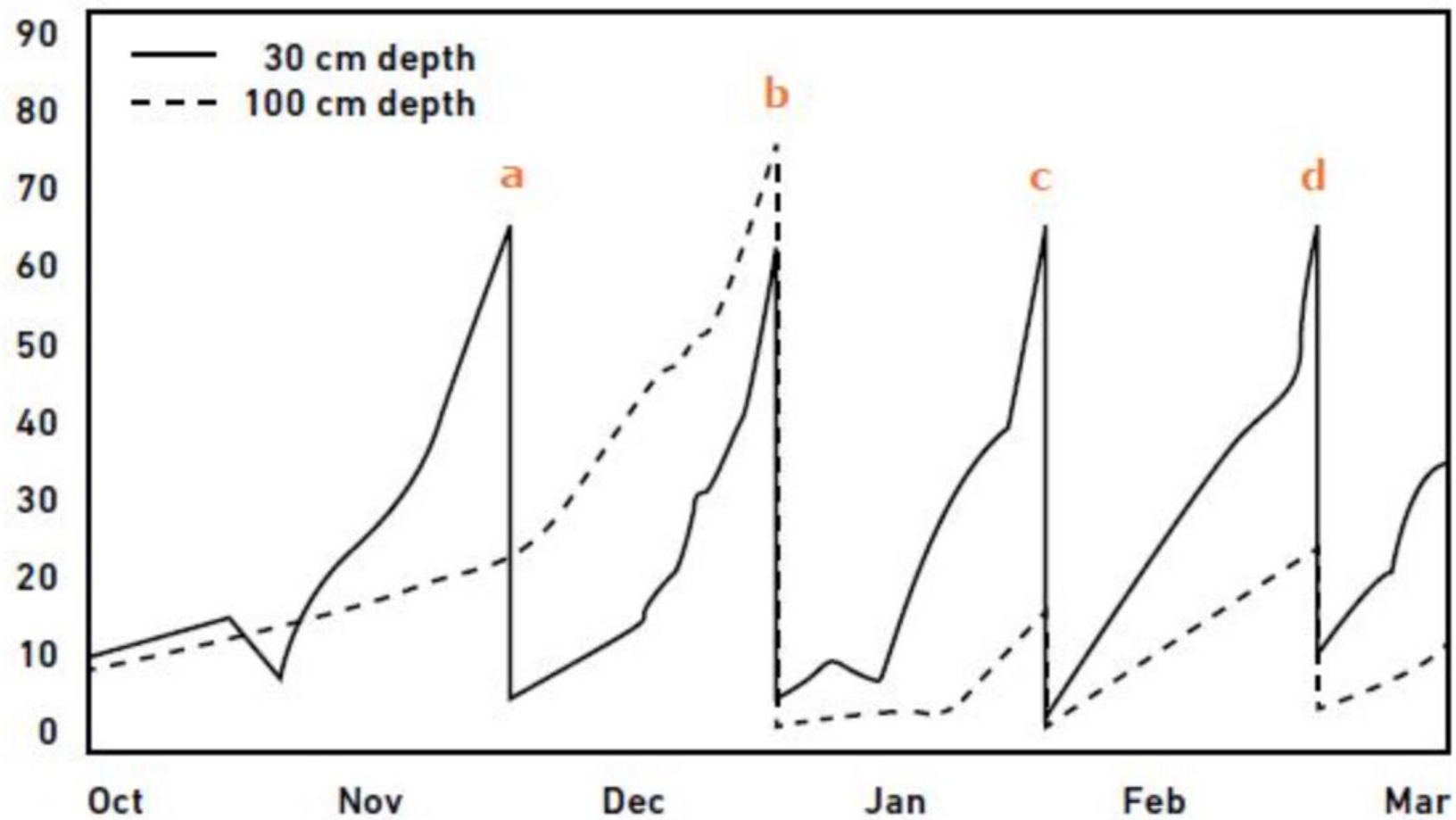
SOIL MOISTURE DATA

- **APP**
 - **PHONE OR TABLET**
- **ONLINE SOFTWARE**
 - **COMPUTER**
- **IMPORT INTO A PLATFORM**
 - **API**

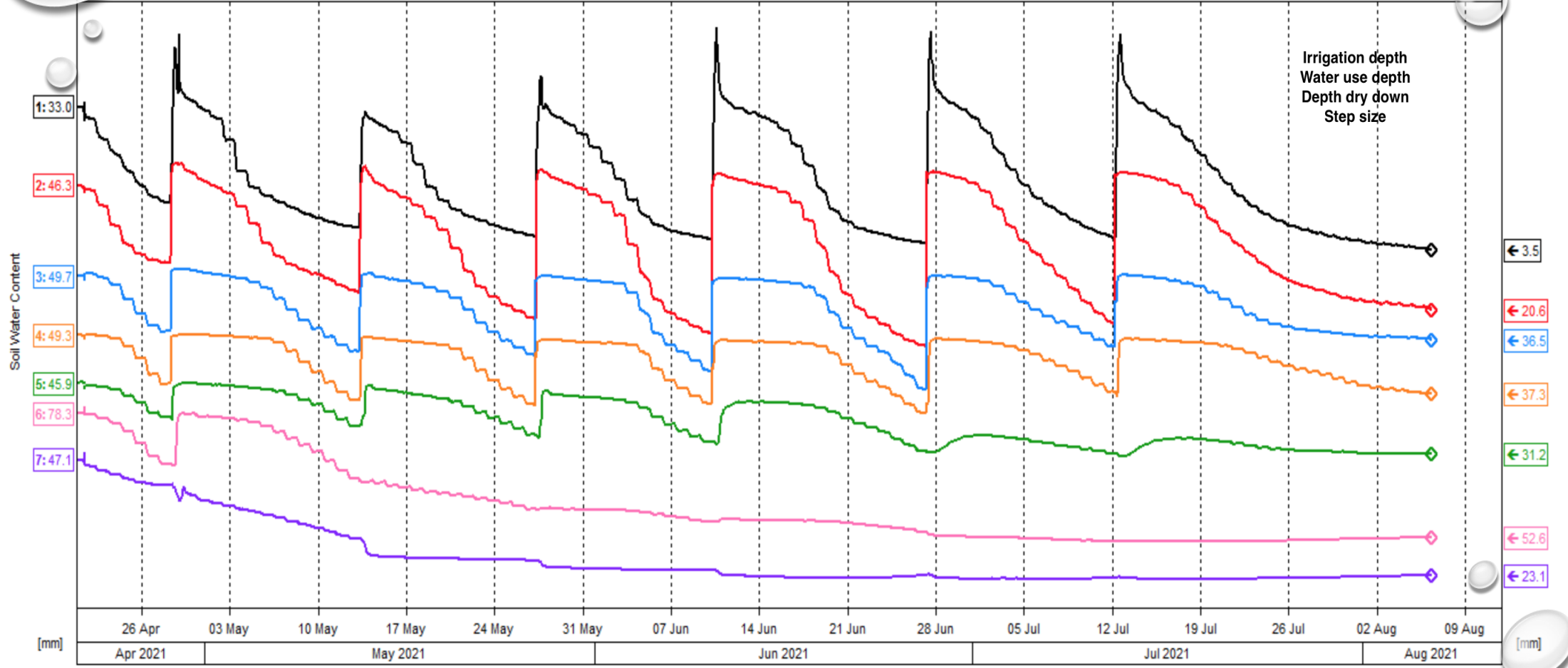
Longer [redacted] Last reading 2021-08-06 07:30 - Site 'Default', Probe 'P1', Depth 10 + 20 + 30 + 40 + 60 + 80 + 100 cm (Sum)



Tensiometer reading (kPa)



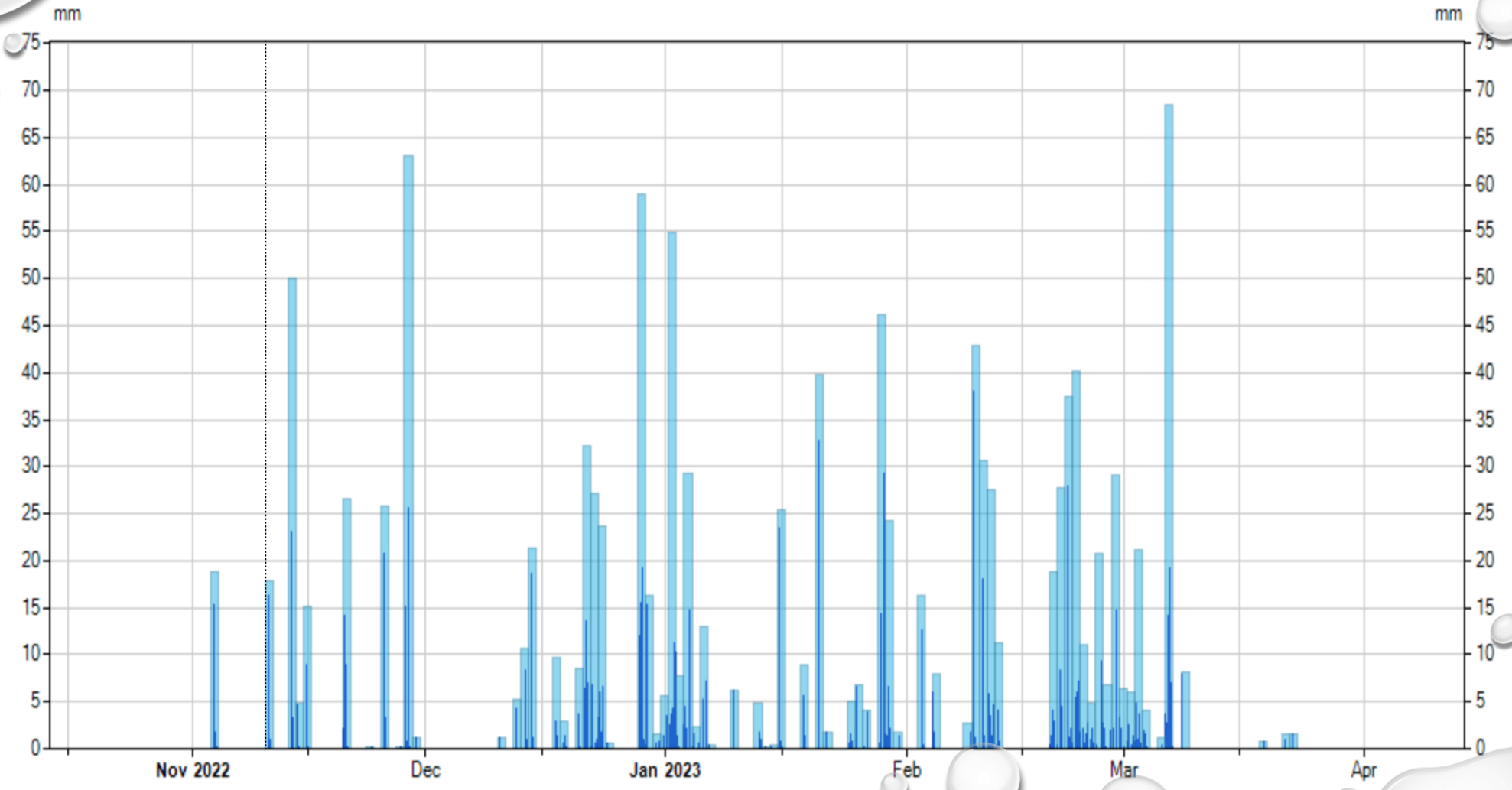
Longer Last reading 2021-08-06 07:30 — 1: Site 'Default', Probe 'P1', 10 cm — 2: 20 cm — 3: 30 cm — 4: 40 cm — 5: 60 cm — 6: 80 cm — 7: 100 cm





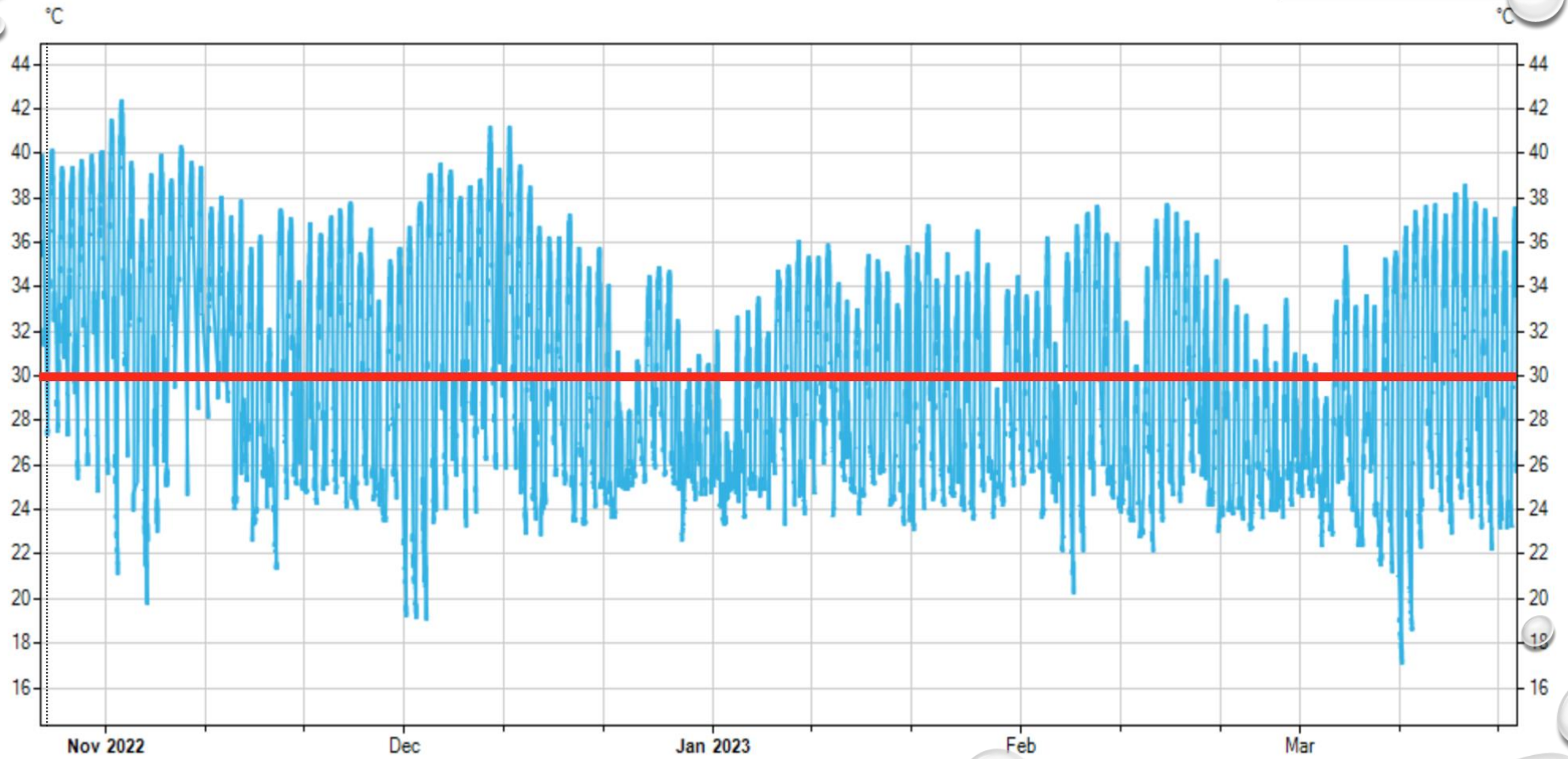
NT Farmers - Katherine Rainfall

All data



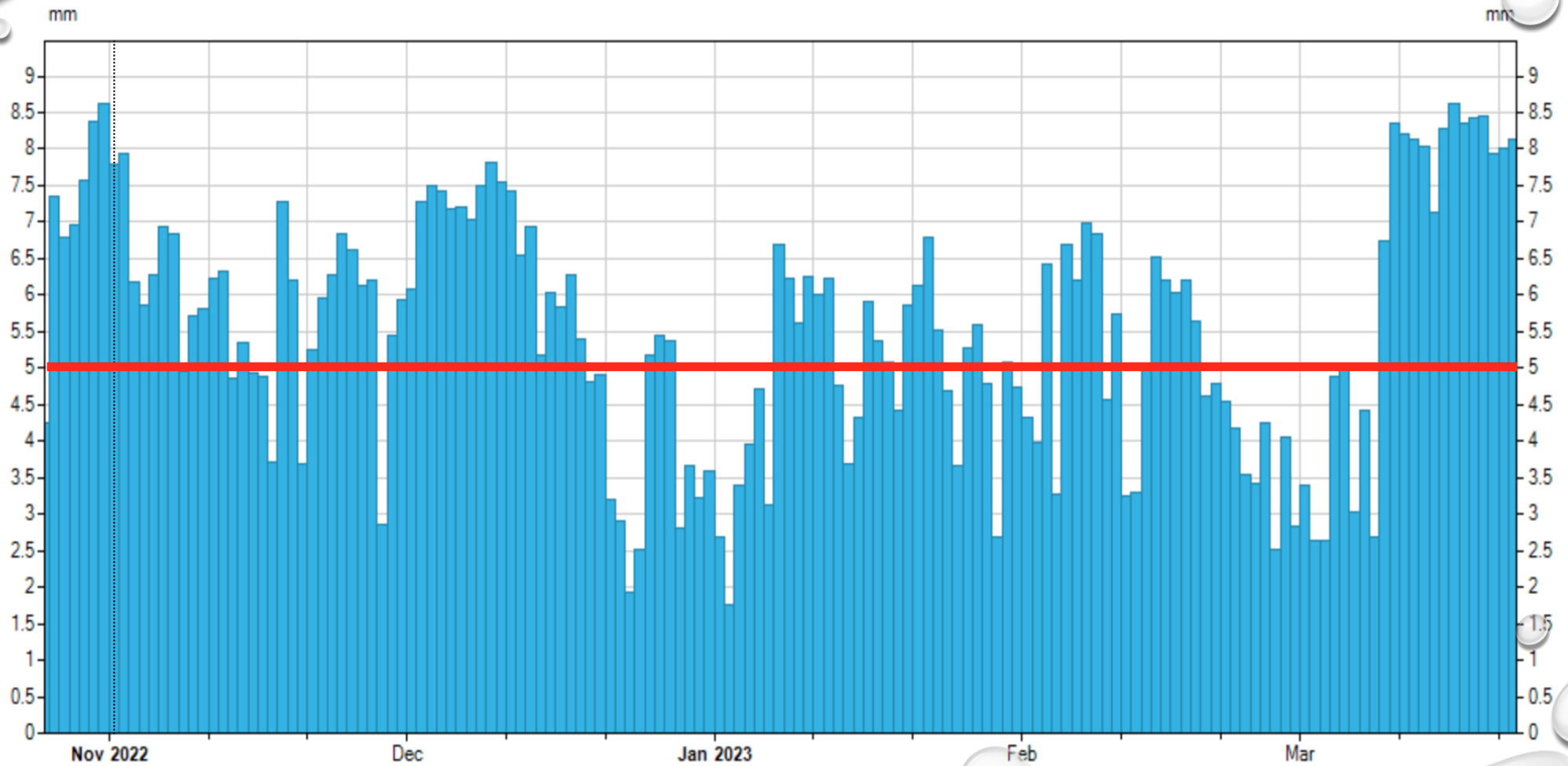
NT Farmers - Katherine - Temperature Deg C

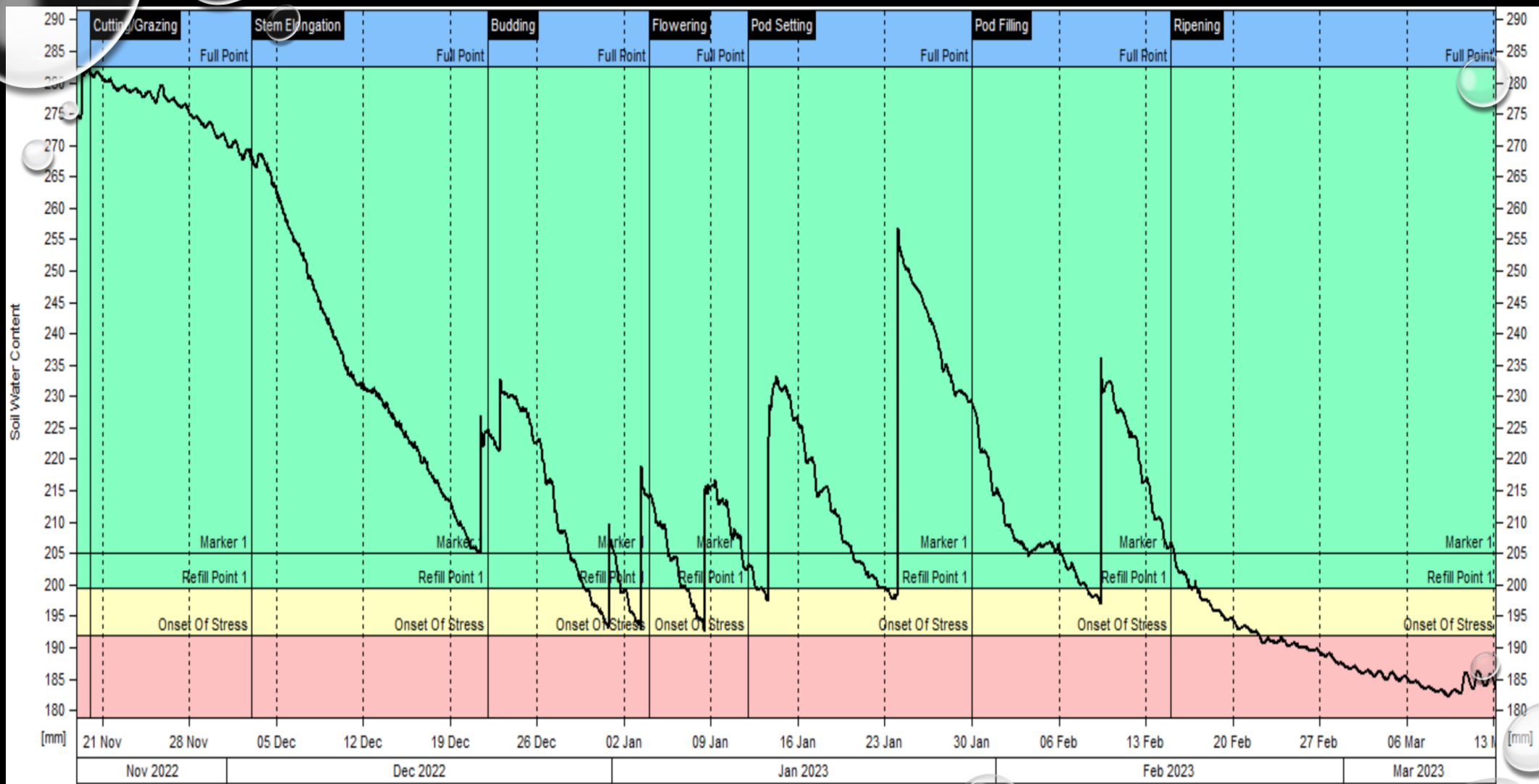
All data

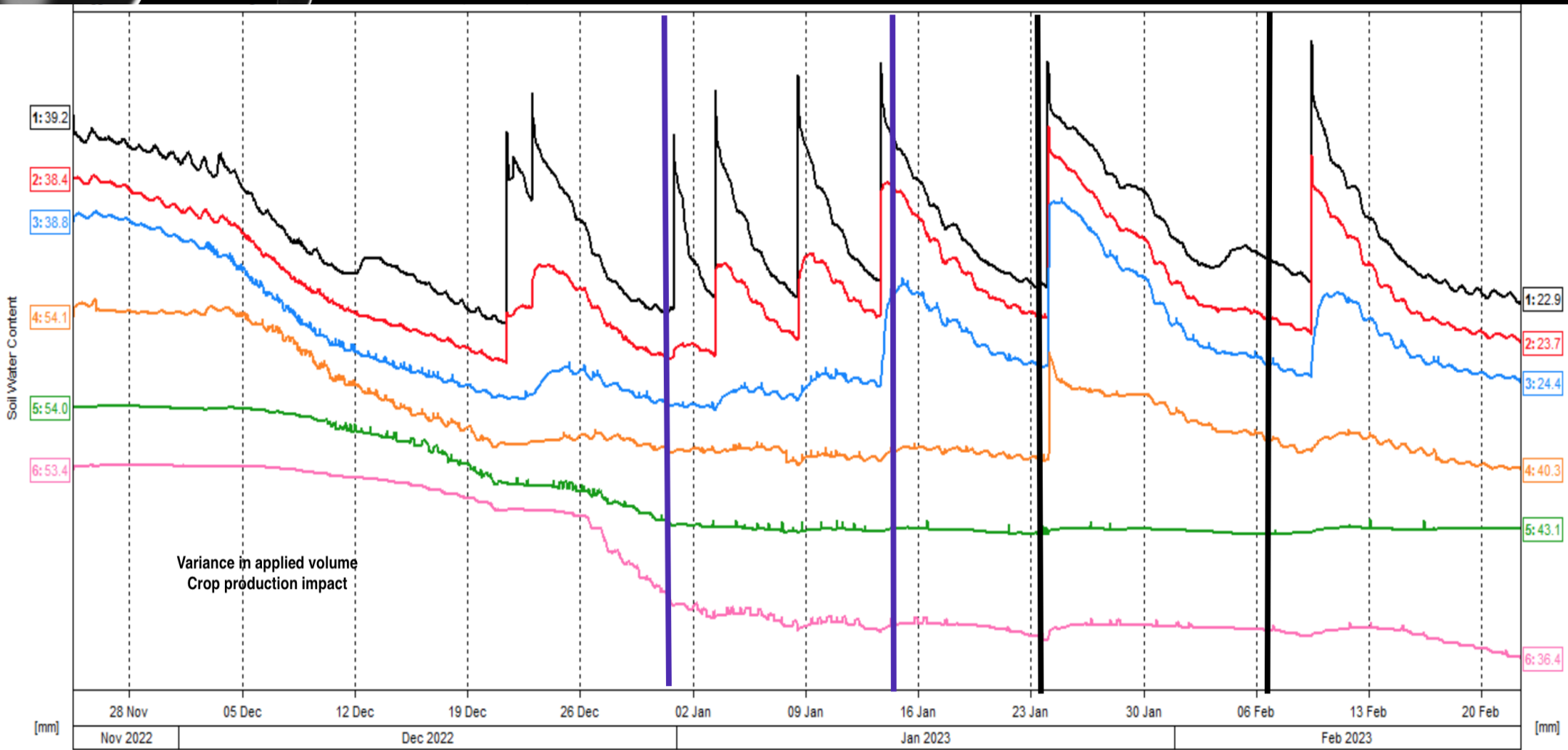


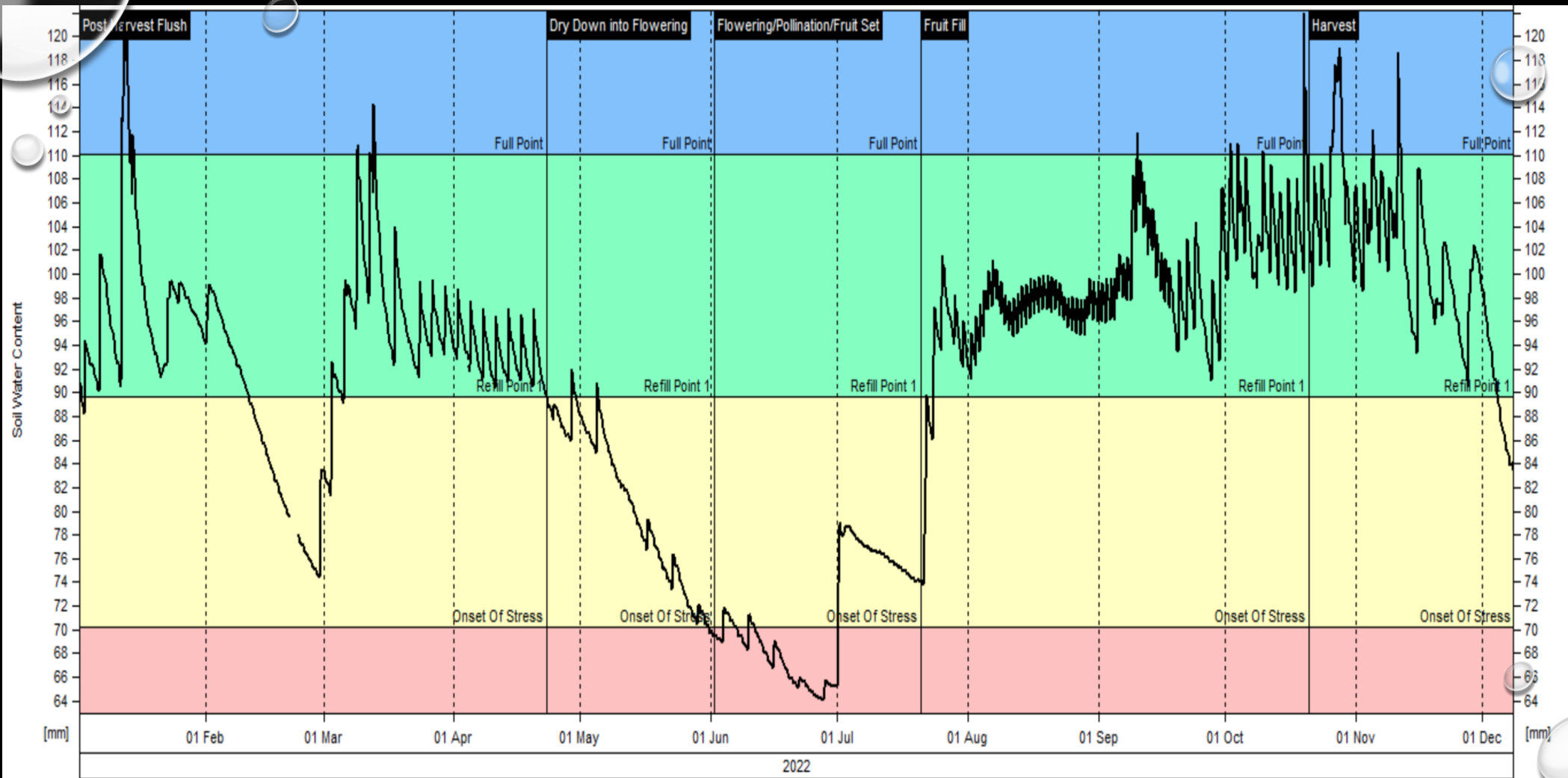
NT Farmers - Katherine - ETo

All data

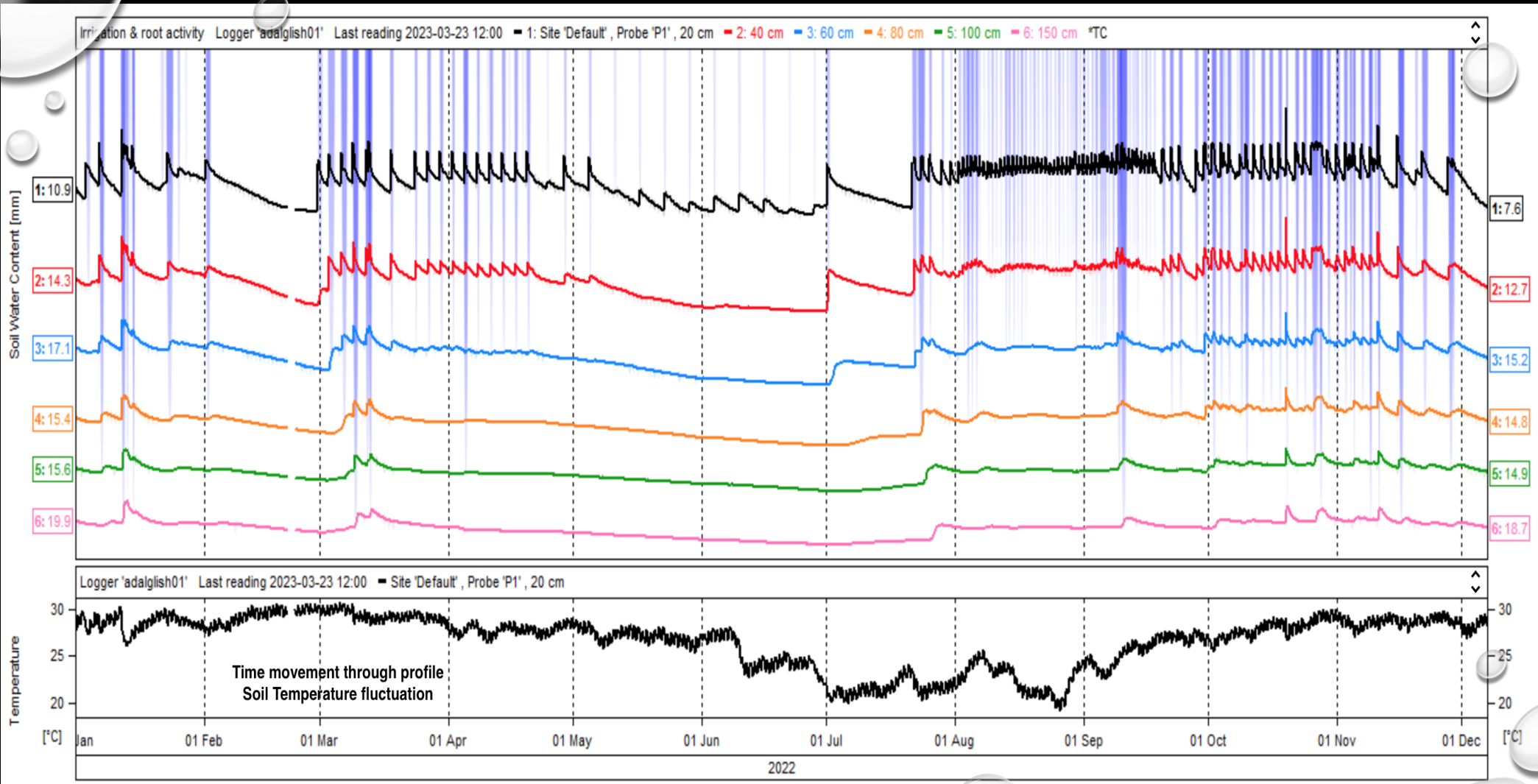


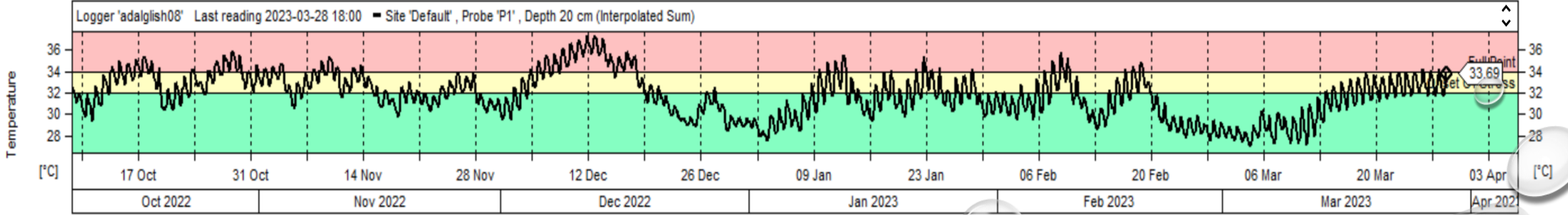
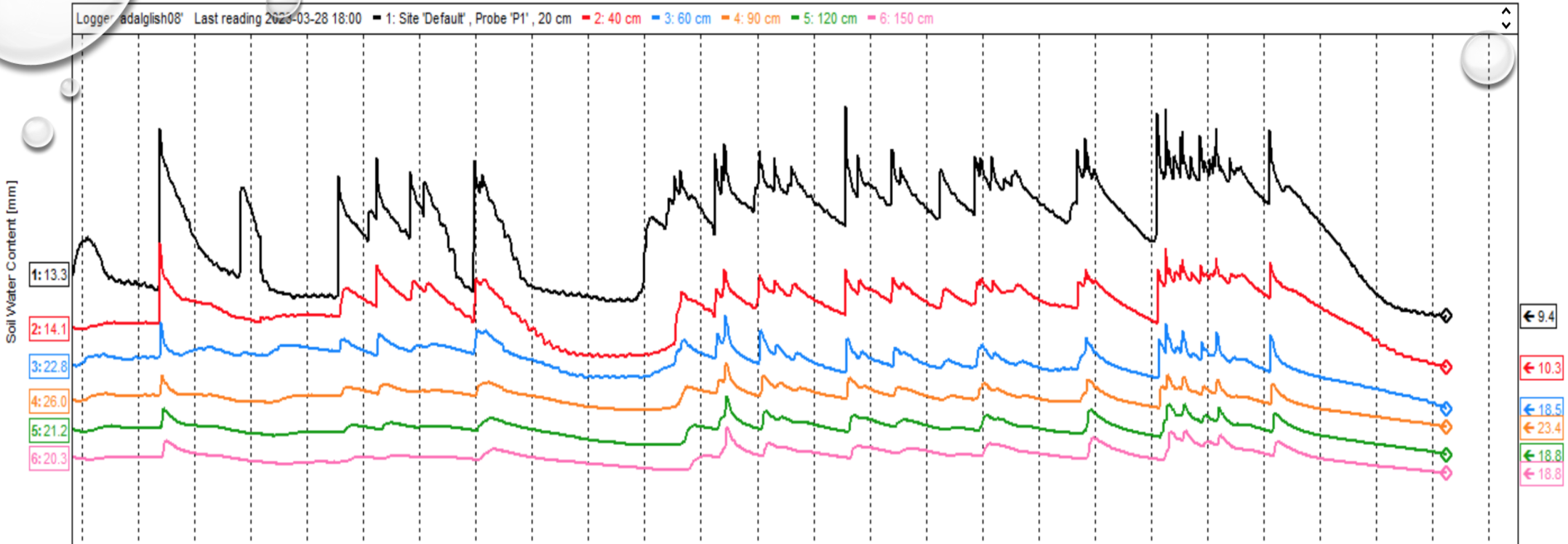




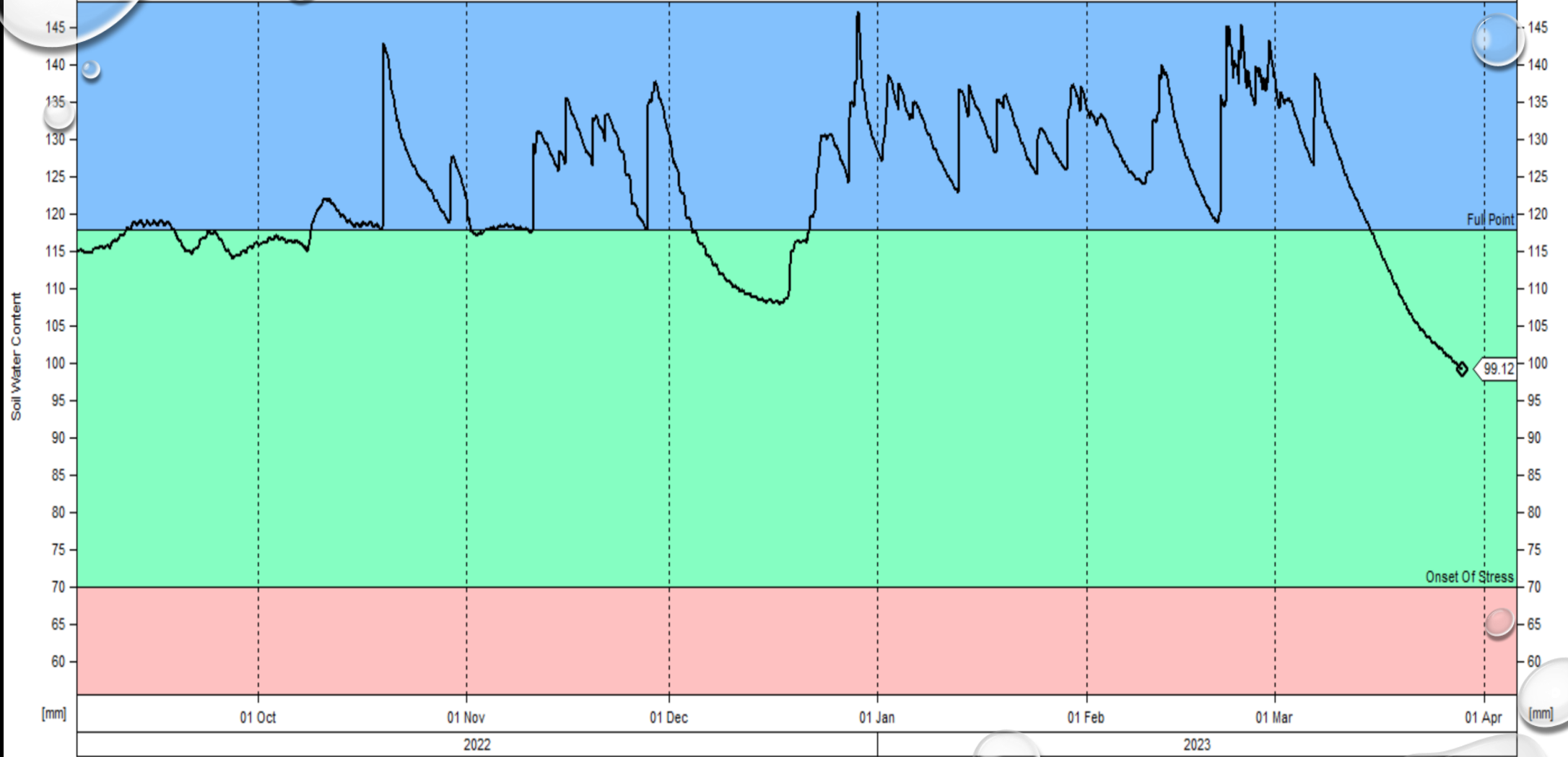


Generated by Irrimax™ Sentek Pty Ltd





Logger 'adenglish08' Last reading 2023-03-28 18:00 - Site 'Default', Probe 'P1', Depth 20 + 40 + 60 + 90 + 120 + 150 cm (Sum)



The background of the slide is black, featuring numerous realistic water droplets and bubbles of various sizes. Some are large and prominent, while others are small and scattered. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

FINAL THOUGHTS

**NOT AN OPTIONAL EXTRA
INFORMED DECISION MAKING
IMPROVE \$/ML AND CAPITAL
INVESTMENT RETURN**



FERTIGATION and AUTOMATION

John Witherspoon March 2023



Agenda



FERTIGATION



IMPACT OF HYDRAULIC DESIGN



DOSING METHODS



DOSING SYSTEMS



AUTOMATION

What do plants need?



Water



Food



Health

We can supply plant's needs through:



Irrigation



Fertilizers

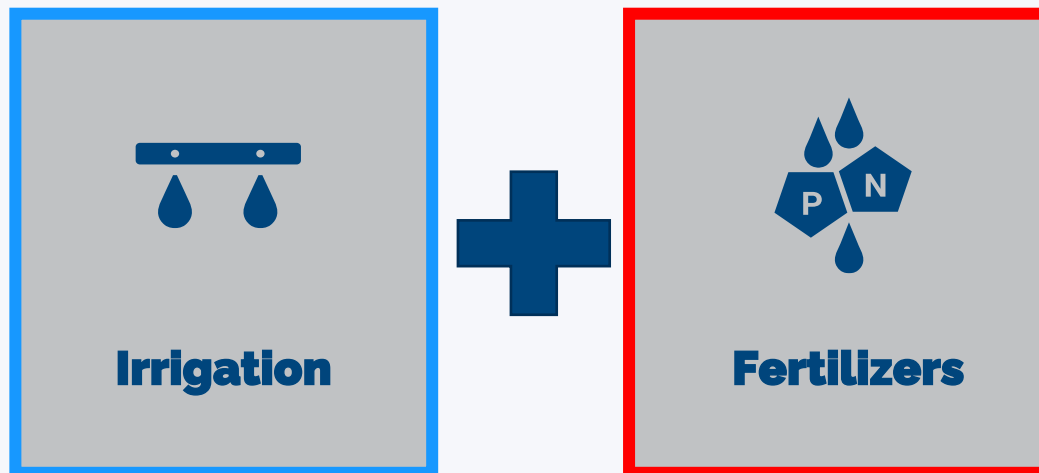


Plant
protection

Fertigation

Fertigation = Irrigation + Fertilization

Fertigation is a field technique, which precisely delivers the plant nutrients via irrigation system to the crop root zone. The level of nutrition according to the crop demand during crop growing season.



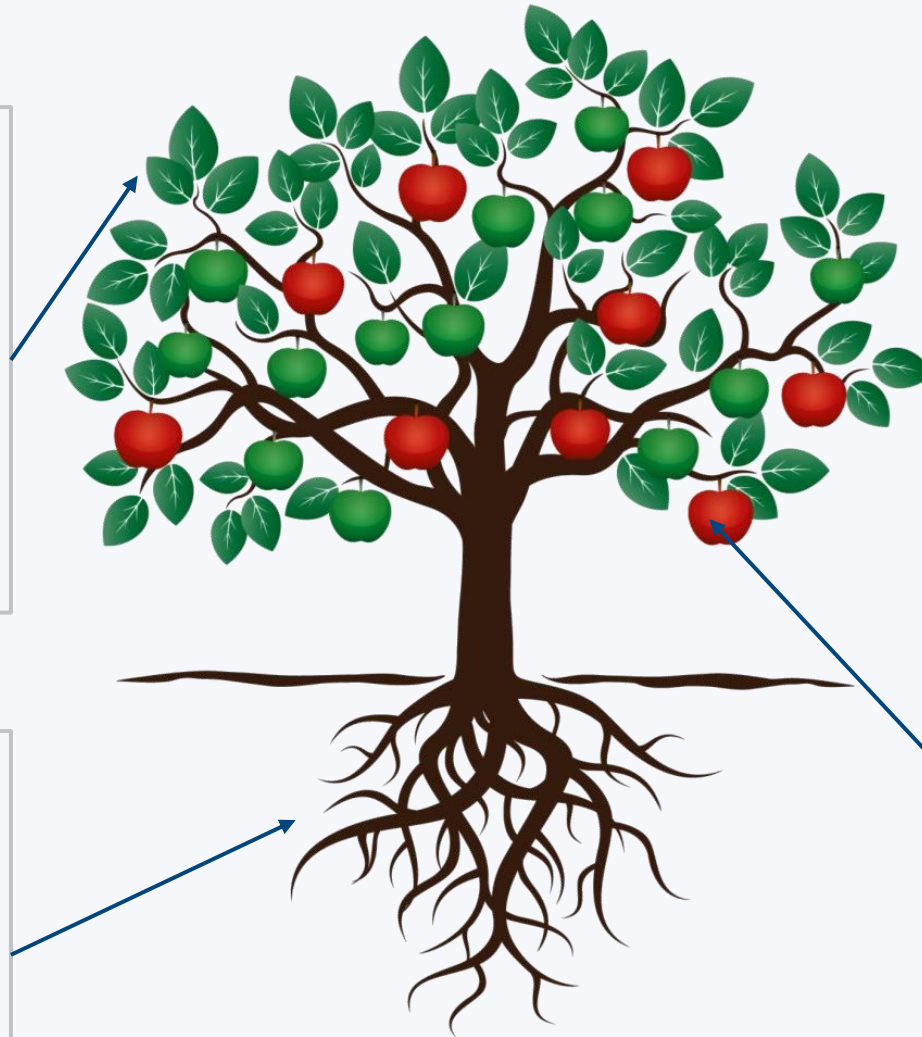
Major Essential Nutrients

Essential nutrients – mineral nutrients that are crucial for plant growth

- ✓ **Macro elements: Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium (K).**
- ✓ **Secondary elements: Calcium, Magnesium (Mg), Sulphur.**
- ✓ **Microelements: Fe, Mn, B, Zn, Cu, Mo, Cl**
- ✓ **Carbon, Hydrogen, Oxygen – Carbon and Oxygen from atmospheric fixation in the photosynthetic reaction and respiration. Hydrogen and Oxygen from water hydrolysis.**

NPK role in the plants

**Nitrogen
(NO₃, NH₄)
-
Vegetative
growth**



**Phosphorus
(P or P₂O₅) –
Root growth
and
flowering**

**Potassium
(K or K₂O)
– Fruit
growth
(water and
sugars)**

Nutrients

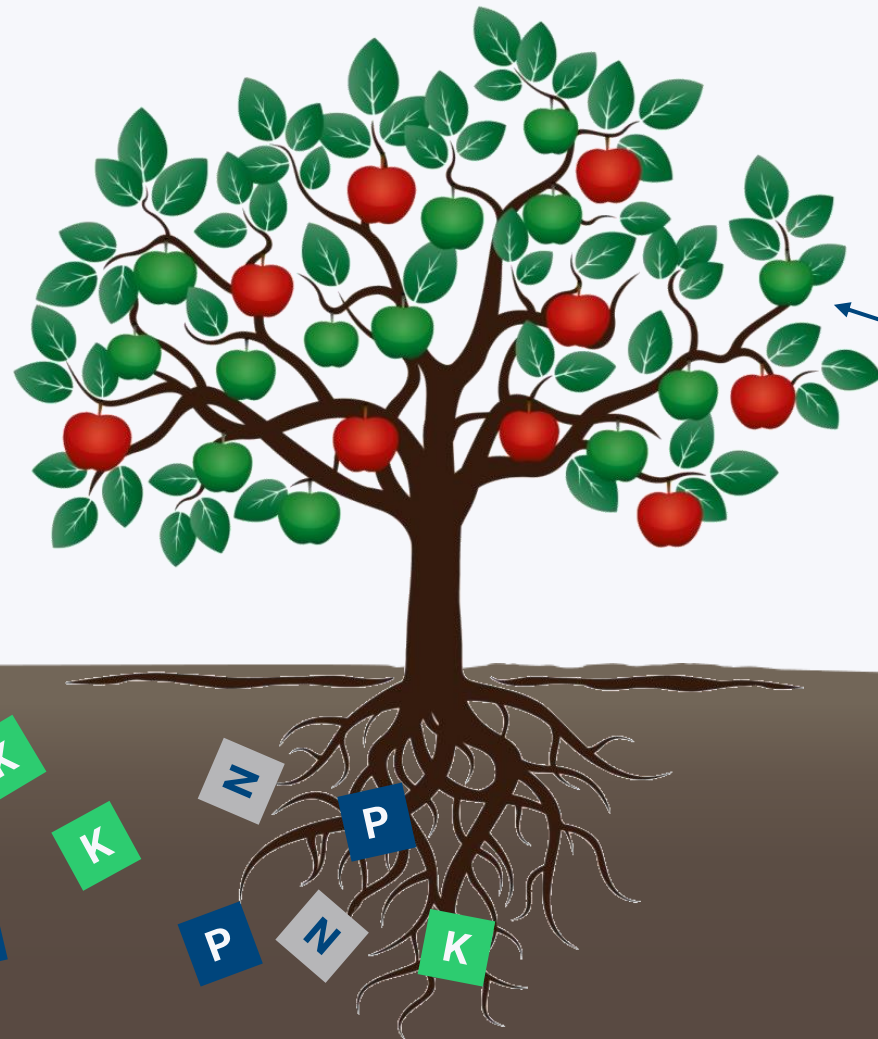
What form can the products take?

- ✓ Granular
- ✓ Soluble
- ✓ Liquid



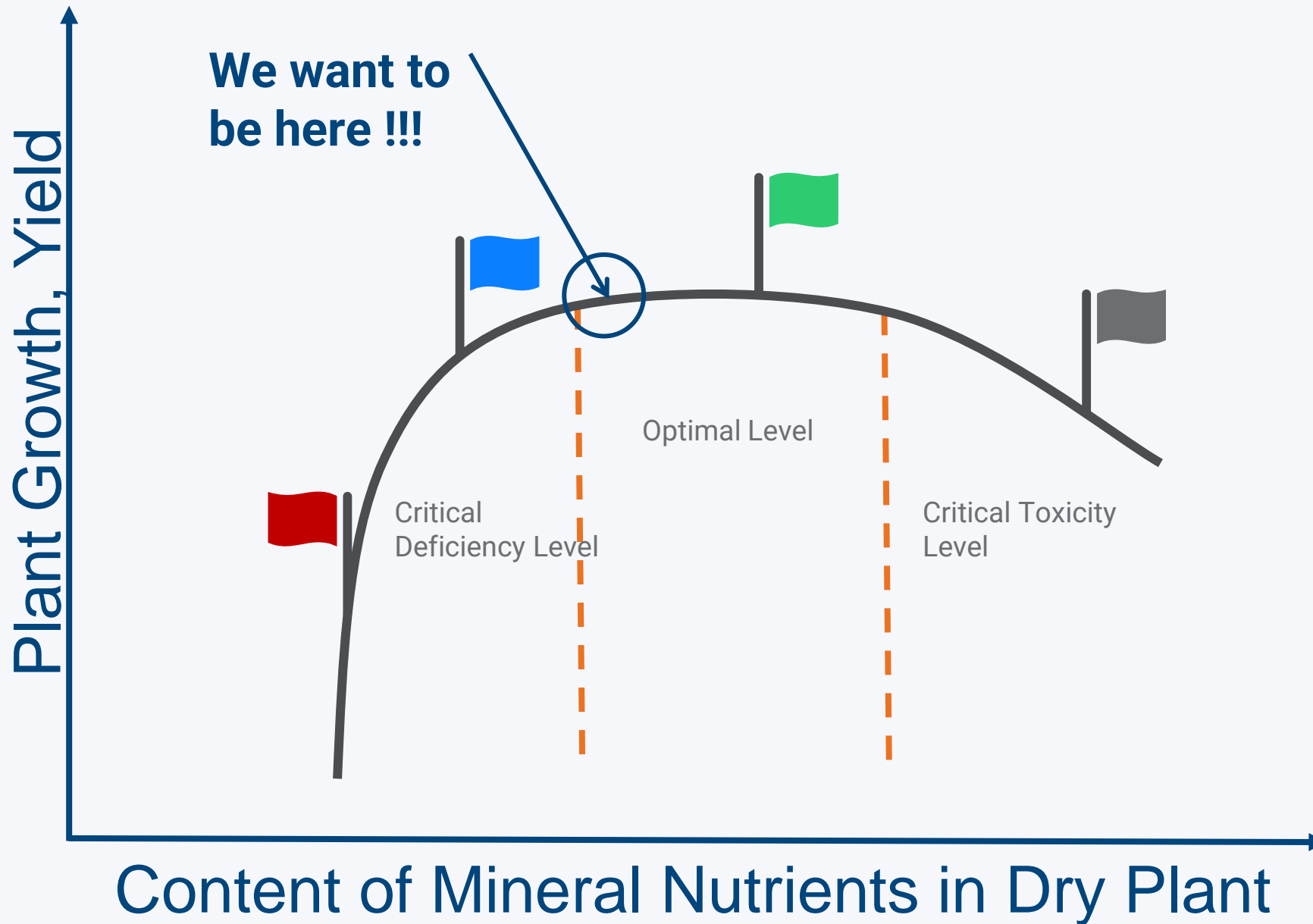
Fertilization Process

Source



Sink

Nutrient / Growth Ratio



Fertigation Dosing Methods

✓ Bulk

✓ By Time or Quantity

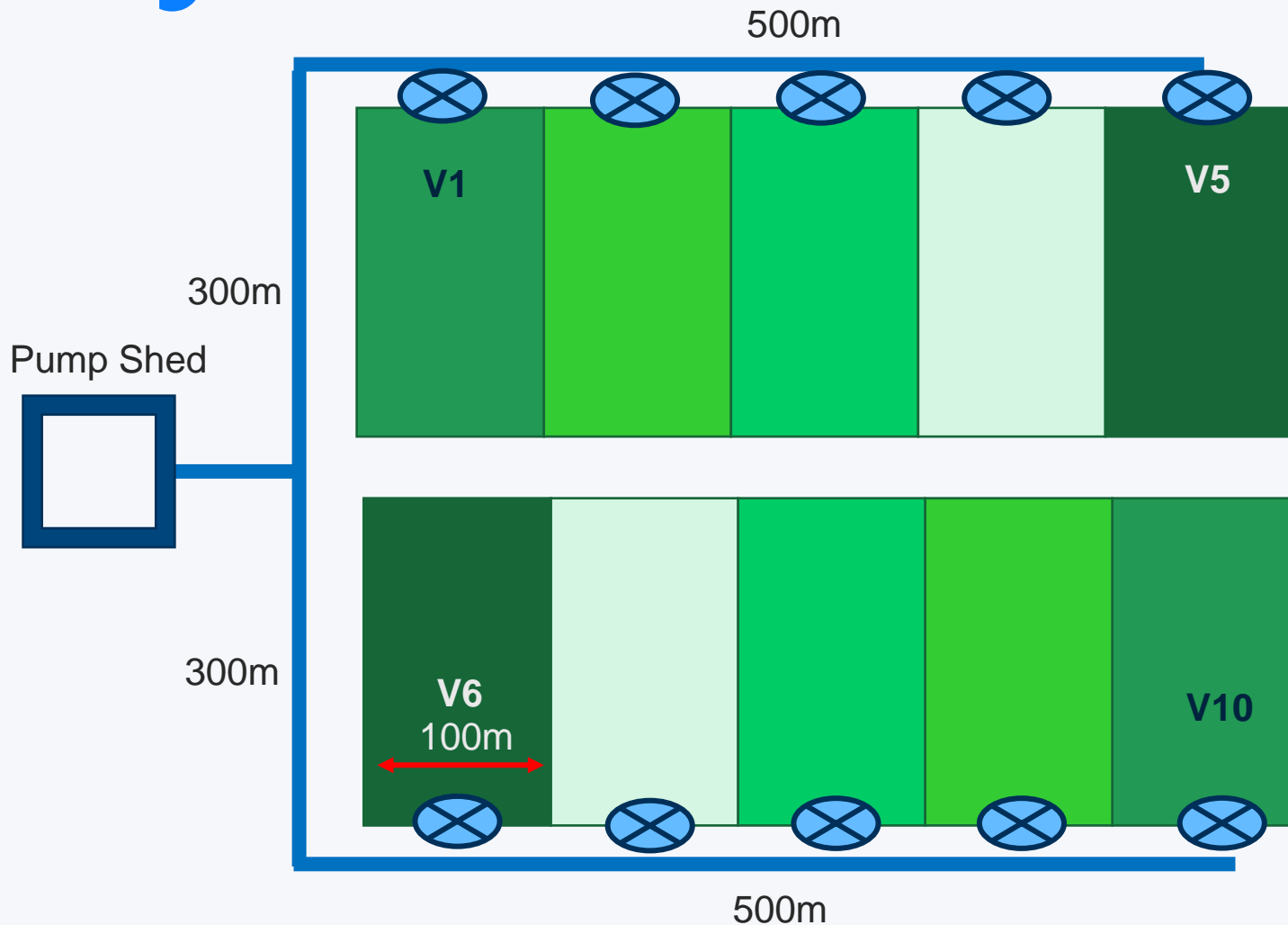
✓ Spread [Bulk]

✓ By Time or Quantity

✓ Proportional [Ratio]

✓ Usually Liters per Cubic Meter $_x/1000$

Farm Irrigation Hydraulic Layout



Velocity in single mainline

- **1m/sec**

Travel time to V1?

Total Main length

400m

Therefore 400sec

7 Min

Travel time to V5?

Total Main length

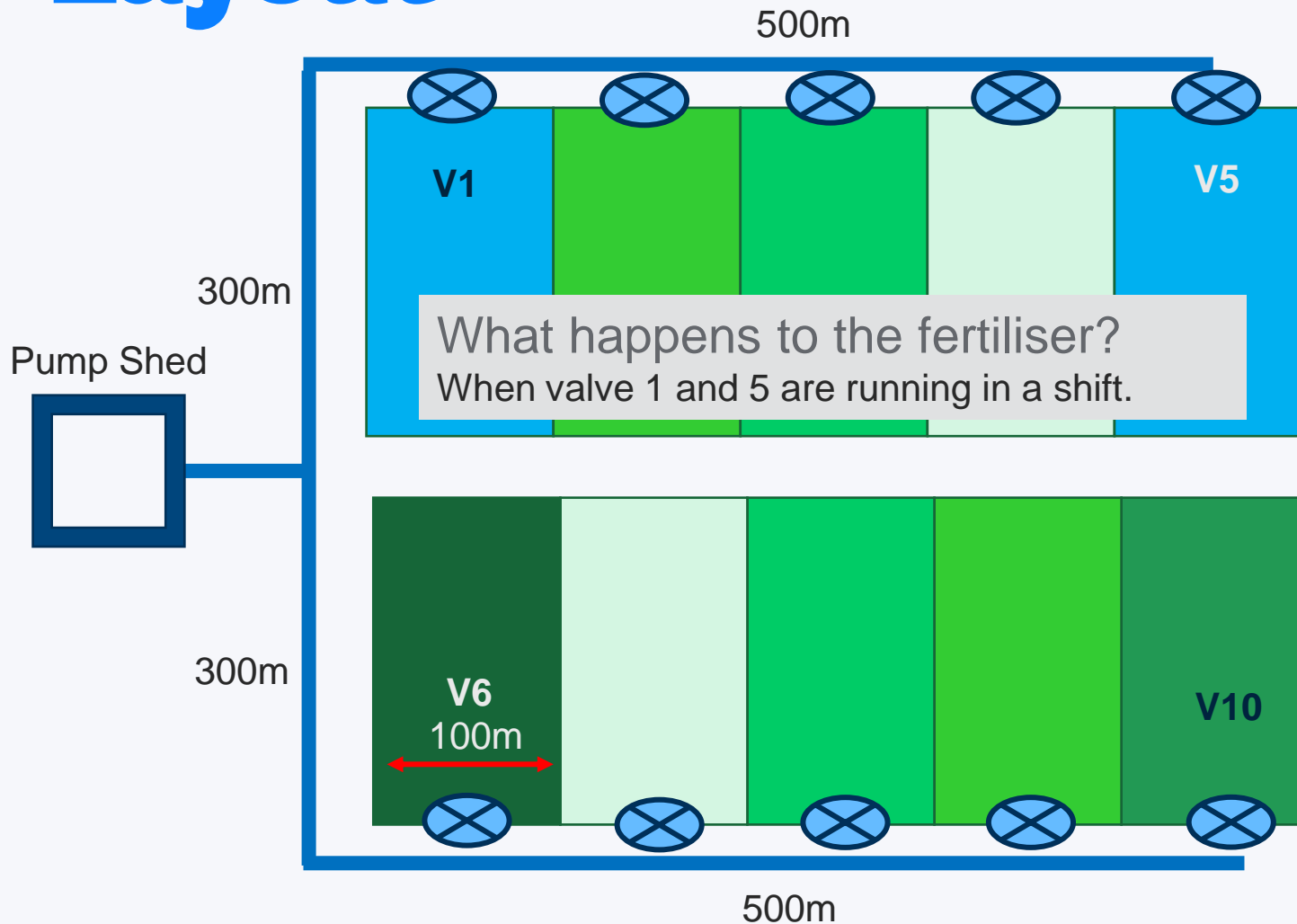
800m

Therefore 800sec

14mins

***Assuming all pipes are the same size**

Farm Irrigation Hydraulic Layout

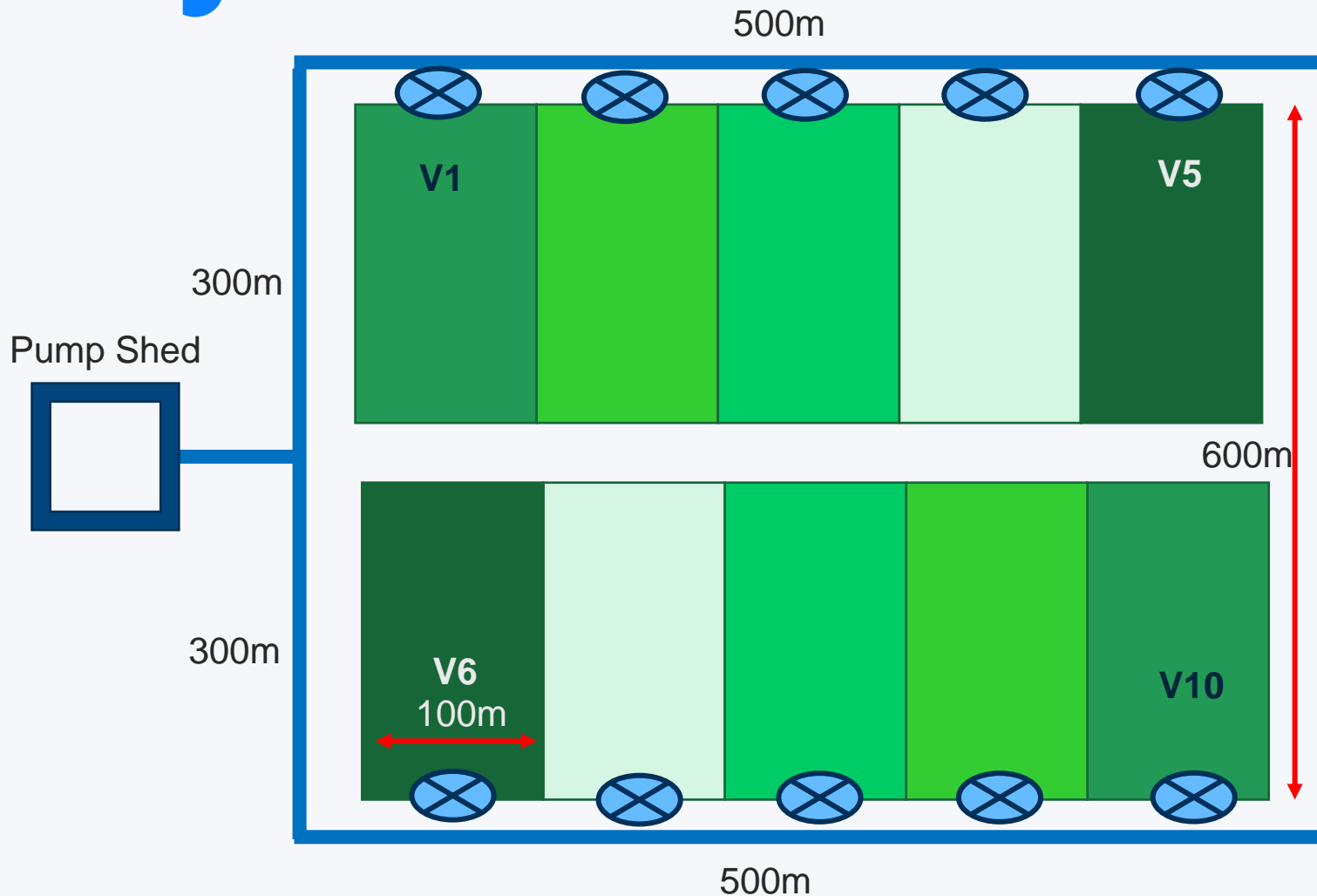


**Travel time to V1?
3.5 Min**

**Travel time to V5?
10mins**

Assume the velocity is 2m/sec

Farm Irrigation Hydraulic Layout



Impact of Ring main

Velocity in mainline

- 0.5m/sec

Travel time to V1?

Total Main length

400m

Therefore 800sec

10-14mins

Travel time to V5?

Total Main length

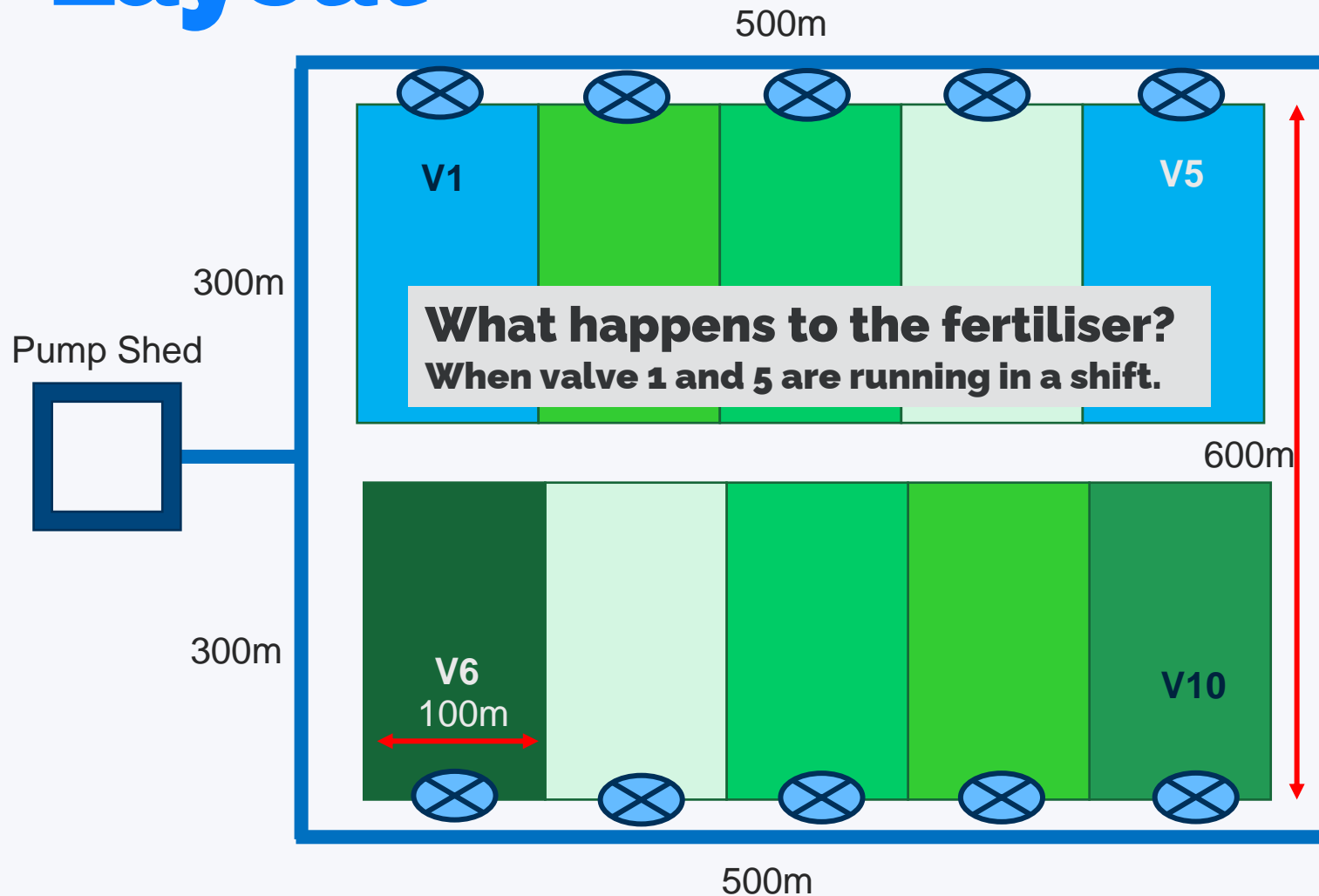
800m

Therefore 1600sec

20-28mins

***Assuming all pipes are the same size**

Farm Irrigation Hydraulic Layout



Impact of Ring main

Velocity in mainline

• **1m/sec**

Travel time to V1?

7mins

Travel time to V5?

14mins

***Assuming all pipes are the same size**

Bulk Fertigation

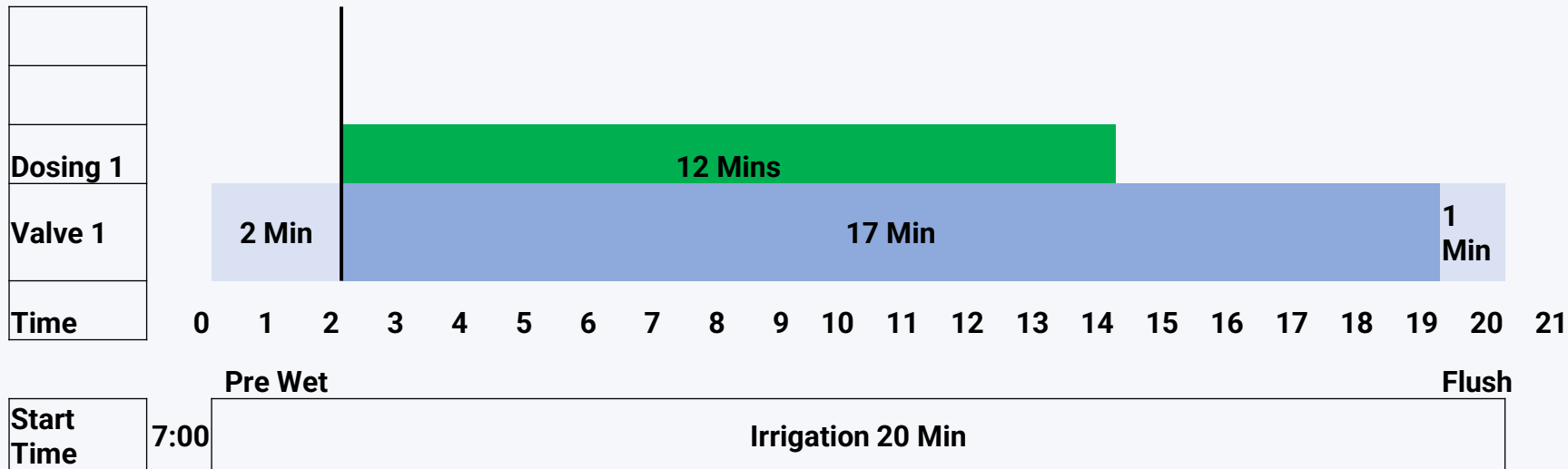


Irrigation program 1	
Start Time	07:00
Valve #	1
Run Time #	1
Dosing prog #	1

Water Run Time Program 1				
#	Method	Water	Before	After
1	TIME	00:20:00	00:02:00	00:01:00

Dosing Program - 1			
Injection per dosing channel			
1			
Passive			
12			
Passive dosing method			Time

Dosing Configuration	
Dosing by Time. Method	Bulk



Bulk Fertigation

Advantages	Disadvantages
Low cost: Just requires a pump	Timing typically fortnightly [because of manual operation]
Usual method for manual application	High Concentration of salts in root zone, Change in EC and pH
Can be used at valve level	Usually only a single channel
Can be automated	High labour cost
	Usually a program per valve or shift
	Best suited to single valve application

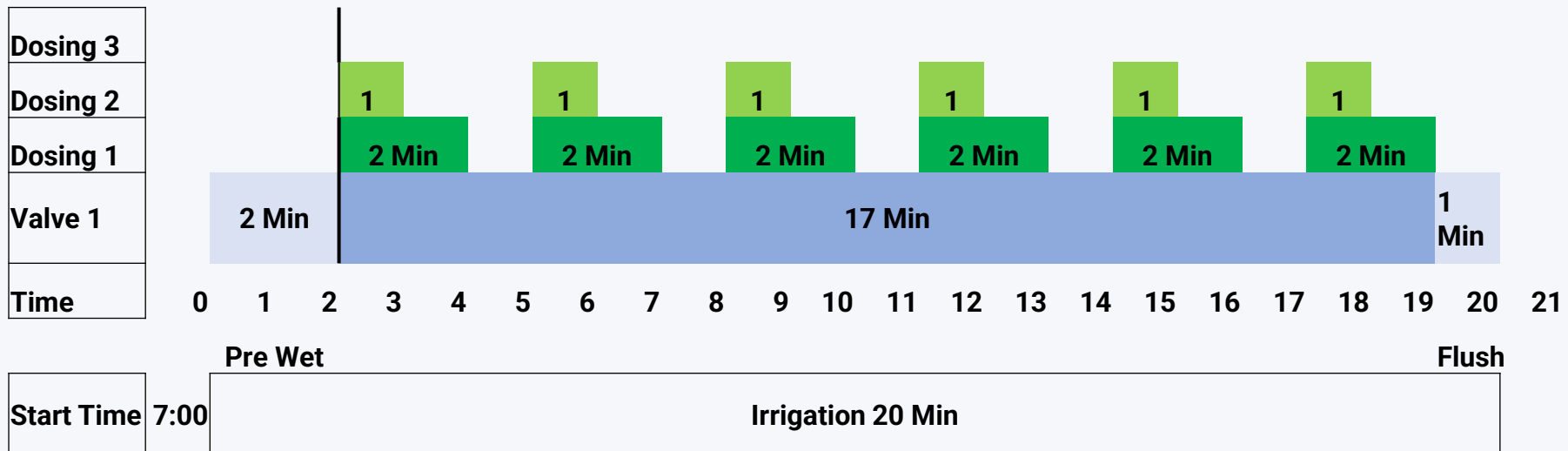
Spread [Bulk] Fertigation

Irrigation program 1	
Start Time	07:00
Valve #	2
Run Time #	1
Dosing prog #	2

Water Run Time Program 1				
#	Method	Water	Before	After
1	TIME	00:20:00	00:02:00	00:01:00

Dosing Program - 2			
Injection per dosing channel			
1	2		
Passive	Passive		
12	6		
Passive dosing method			Time

Dosing Configuration	
Dosing by Time. Method	Spread



Spread [Bulk] Fertigation

Advantages	Disadvantages
Less concentration of salts in the root zone spread of the irrigation	Requires automation
More even application to all valves in the shift	Requires a program per valve of valve shift
	Does not adjust for variation in shift flow
	Does not suit motor driven electric pumps [too many on/off operations
	Best suited to single valve application.

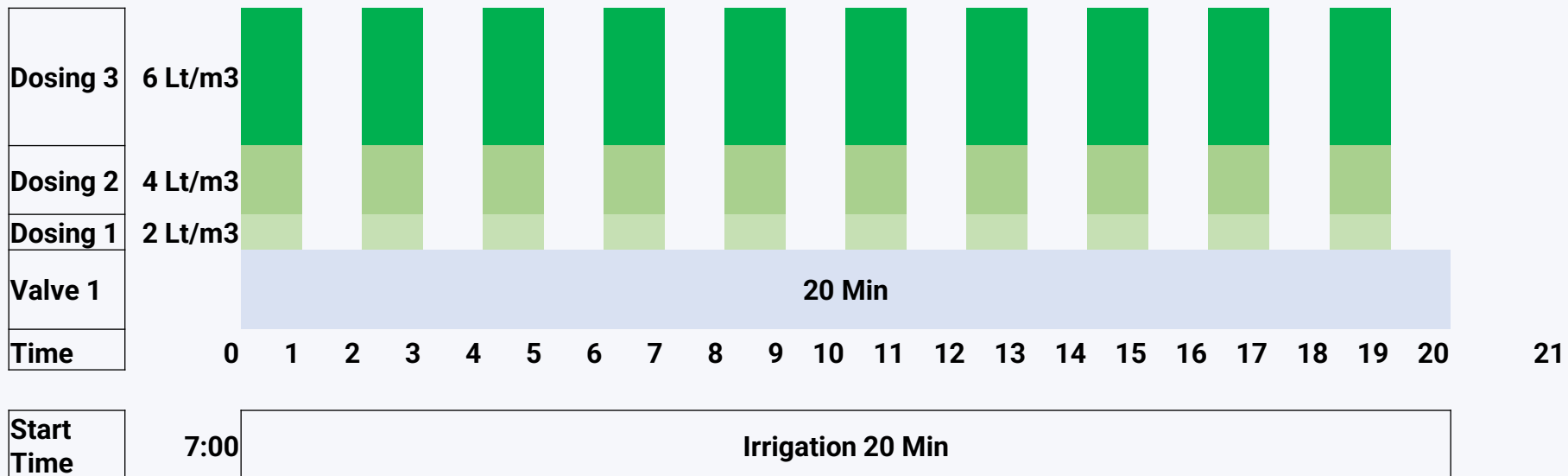
Proportional Qty [Ratio] Fertigation



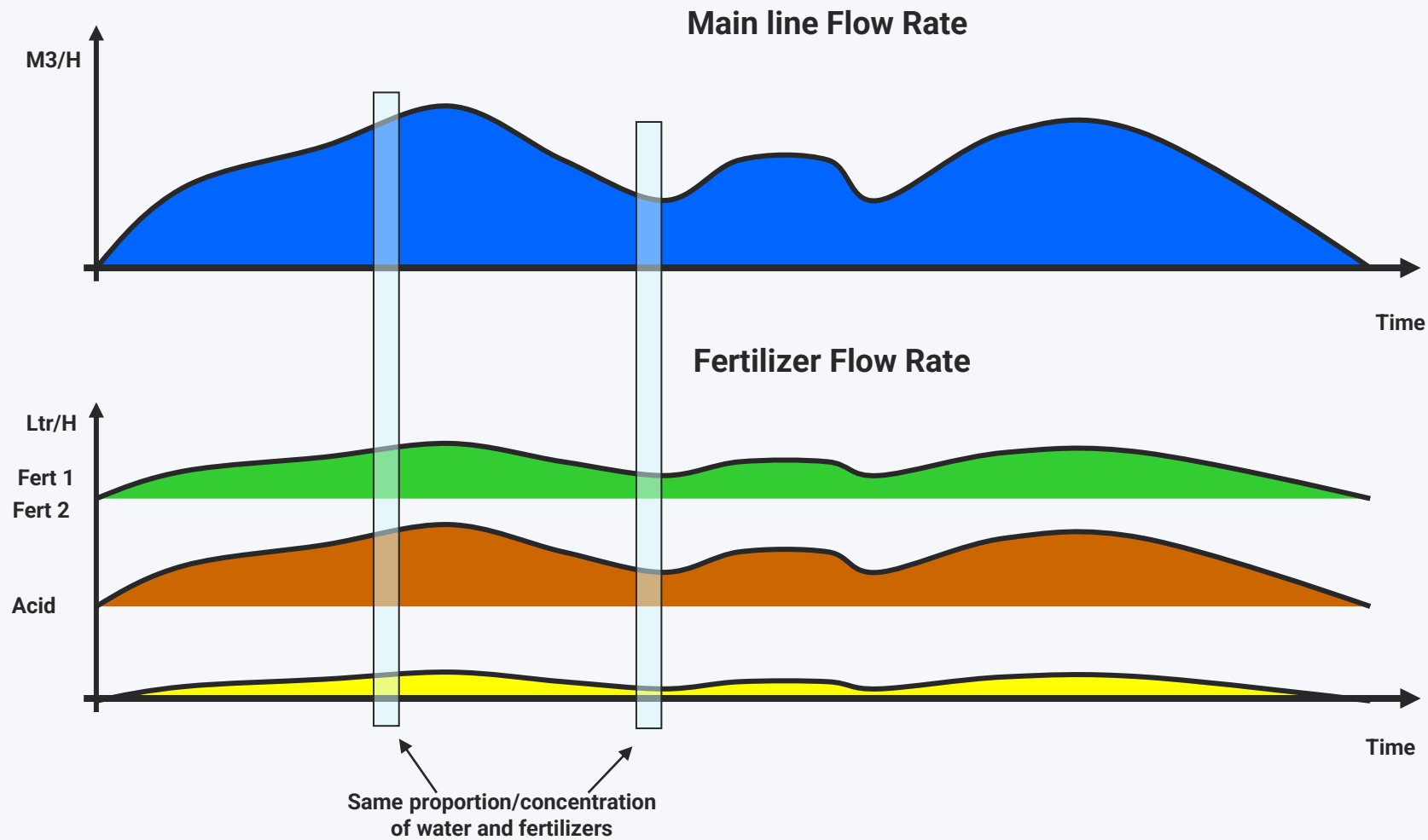
Irrigation program 1	
Start Time	07:00
Valve #	3
Run Time #	2
Dosing prog #	3

Water Run Time Program 1				
#	Method	Water	Before	After
1	TIME	00:20:00	00:02:00	00:01:00

Dosing Program - 3			
Injection per dosing channel			
1	2	3	
Passive	Passive	Passive	
2	4	6	
Passive dosing method			P.QT Y



Proportional Qty [Ratio] Fertigation



* Proportional to Main Flow

Proportional Qty [Ratio] Fertigation

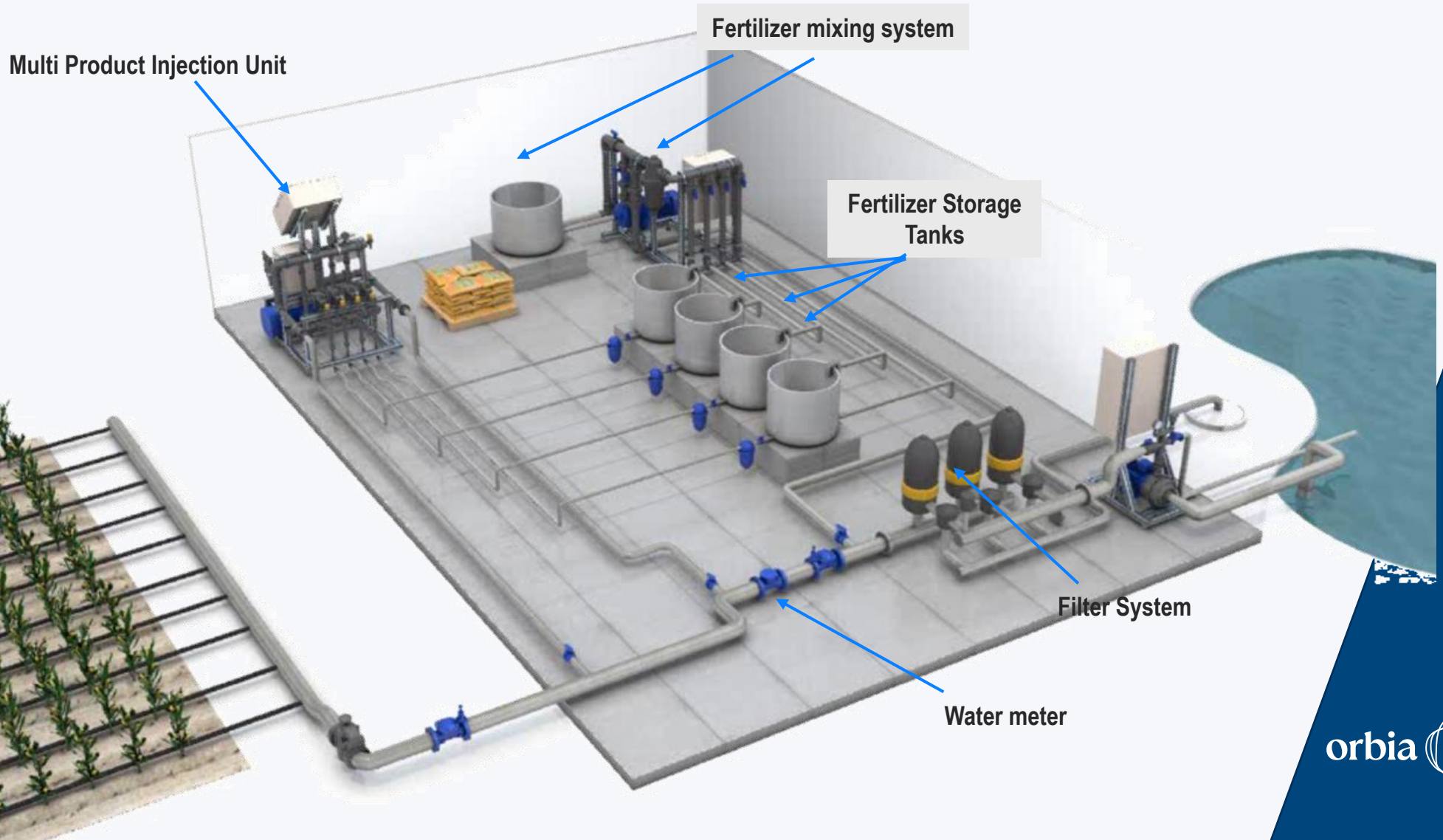


Advantages	Disadvantages
Fertigation with every irrigation	Requires automation
Low concentration of fertiliser in the mainline at any time	Cannot be on/off motor driven electric pumps needs to be variable speed
Injection rate follows changes in flow	Cannot be a manual operation
Constant concentration of fertiliser throughout the system	
One fertiliser program for the crop at the same stage	
The plant root environment is almost constant, no excessive change in EC or pH	

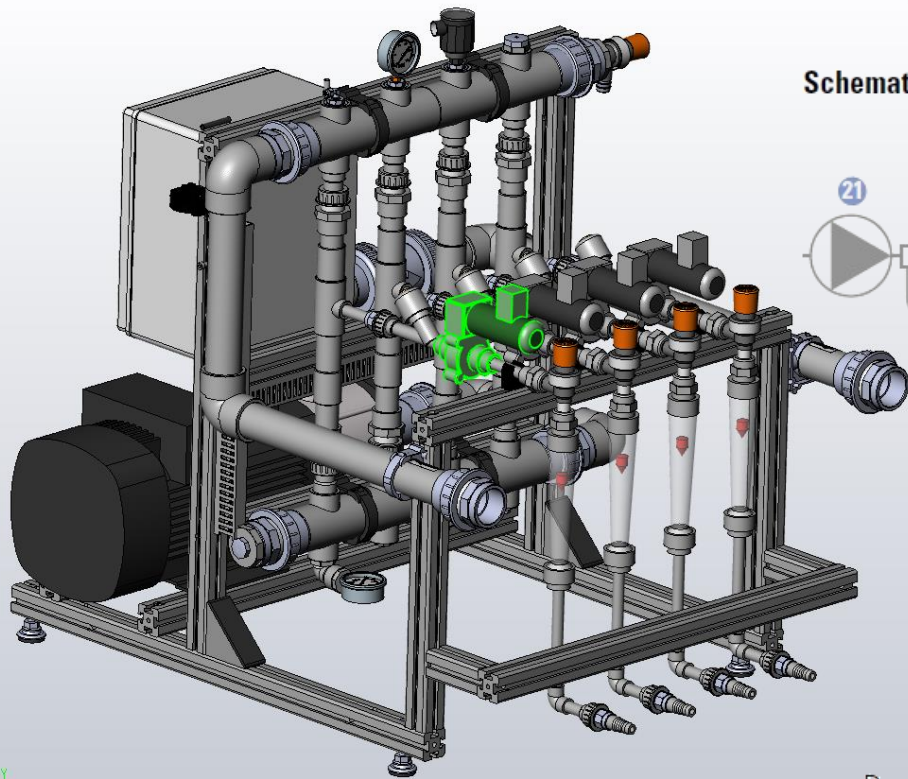
Fertigation System Components

- ✓ **Water meter on the mainline**
- ✓ **Injection Pump [Single or multiple]**
- ✓ **Variable or fixed speed pump**
- ✓ **Fertiliser meter per pump**
- ✓ **Fertiliser mixing tank**
- ✓ **Storage tank**
- ✓ **Storage tank agitation**

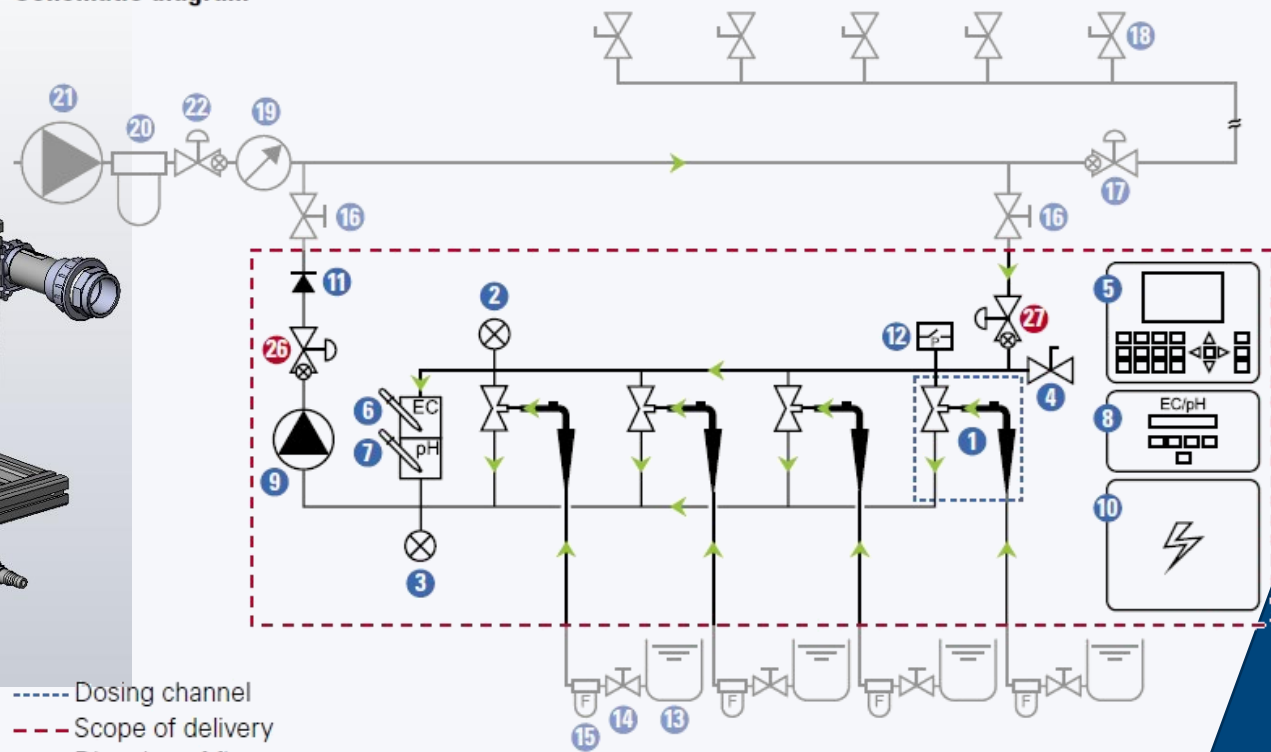
Fertigation System Components



FERTIKIT PL



Schematic diagram

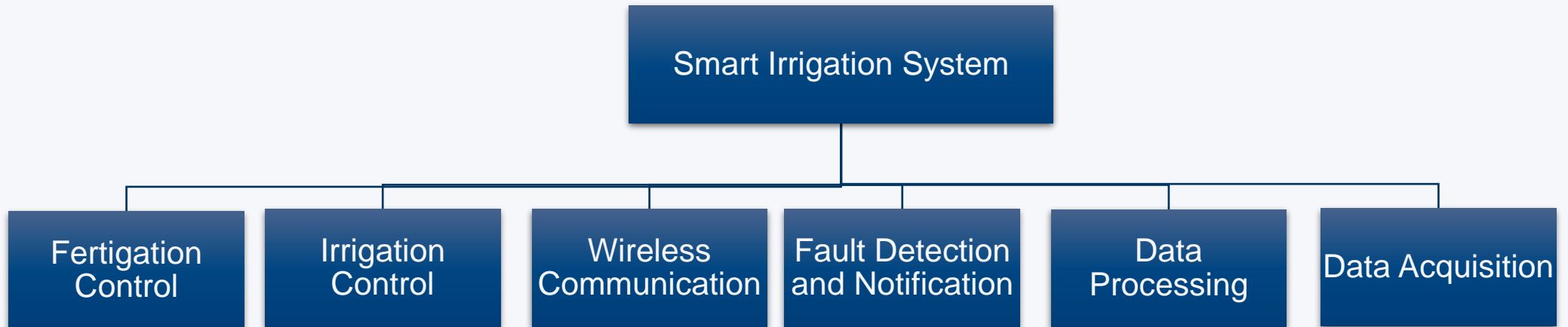


Smart Irrigation System



What is SIS?

It is the automation of your irrigation system using a unified platform, that allows easy remote control.



Smart Irrigation System



Benefits

- ✓ **Reduced resource use, energy, labour and nutrients**
- ✓ **Better crop management**
- ✓ **Optimum crop growth with controller water and nutrient application**
- ✓ **Monitor conditions in real time.**
 - ✓ **From Pumps to Plants**
- ✓ **Prediction services help make informed decisions**
- ✓ **Reduced water consumption**
- ✓ **Disease prevention**
- ✓ **Use of forecasting services**

Smart Irrigation System Control for Agriculture

- ✓ **From your Palm to the Farm remote control from all devices**
- ✓ **Alarm notification, Flow, Pressure Unopened valve etc**
- ✓ **Irrigation, by Time, Quantity and Depth[mm]**
- ✓ **Manage multiple valves in a shift**
- ✓ **Flexible programming**
- ✓ **Fertigation management and operation**
- ✓ **Filter operation**
- ✓ **Extensive logging**

QUESTIONS?

Northern Territory Farmers Association Inc (NT Farmers)

NT Farmers are dedicated to serving the interests of Industry and dealing with enquiries about the sector.

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