

# MODULE 4

## COST BENEFIT CALCULATOR

### BACKGROUND TO IMPROVED PRODUCTION & ECONOMICS

Analysing Phuong's changed farming practices, particularly in soil health management and their impact on his plants and yields, has shed some interesting light on very significant achievements that can benefit other growers. This section takes a closer look at his practices and how they are related to bottom line benefits in terms of costs vs yield benefits at an estimated selling price of **\$1.80/kg** for his capsicums.

Phuong mostly plants his capsicum seedlings in July and the crops tend to be in the ground for about 10 months with 6-7 months of picking (a May planting takes about 4 months till picking and a late planting in October or November takes 3 months). A good crop now will produce 2-3 fruit sets for Phuong with 5-7 fruit per set. So most of the time Phuong averages 20 good quality capsicums per plant. This level of productivity was not always the story. Ten years ago Phuong was more likely to get 6-7 fruit per plant and 1-2 sets only. Back then his first grade pick averaged around 75 % but is now about 91%.

Things began changing significantly about seven years ago in the way Phuong managed his farm and they have returned some nice benefits from his learning and application. He radically changed his approach to preparing for each planting after hosting compost trials conducted by SARDI, and irrigation and salinity trials conducted by the local Natural Resource Management team.

The benefit of these changes is highlighted in two videos (Soil pit workshop & Phuong and SARDI researcher review benefits under '[Soil health management](#)' in the [Resources index](#)). Lessons learned from these trials caused Phuong to abandon chicken manure in favour of organically certified recycled green organics/animal manure compost. He also learned to modify his irrigation program and closely target his watering to meet plant needs in response to weather and changing soil conditions and root profiles.



As Phuong's soil has improved he has reduced his plant density making it easier to achieve good coverage with pesticide spray. The local area has suffered from increasing pesticide resistance problems, but Phuong has been able to keep his losses in check compared to most other growers. Because resistance problems are becoming increasingly severe throughout the region Phuong is likely to adopt an effective bio-control program for next years capsicum crop. (see bio-control vidoes under 'Managing Pests & Diseases' in the [Resources index](#))

## PHUONG'S CHANGES & THEIR COSTS AND BENEFITS

### PHUONG'S FARM:

- > Phuong's improvements as fruit per plant and per m2
- > Breaking down the cost and benefits in \$ and time of Phuong's pratitce changes

### YOUR FARM:

- > Comparing your current production per plant and per m2 with Phuong
- > Estimate the cost and benefits of making changes to your farm & production practices



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