

ABR PROGRAM TECHNICAL COMPLIANCE GUIDE



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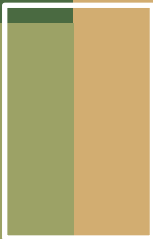
AGRICULTURAL GOOD PRACTICES, ENVIRONMENT, AND UNIT MANAGEMENT | Criteria 7 and 8

Agriculture can generate both positive and negative impacts on the environment depending on the practices adopted. To maximize benefits and reduce damage, it is fundamental to implement actions that protect forests, biodiversity, water resources, and the climate. One of the main pillars of the ABR Program is environmental management, aiming to ensure that farms do not contribute to illegal deforestation or ecosystem degradation. On the contrary, it seeks to promote preservation and recovery.

To achieve this, techniques are implemented to: Reduce water and soil contamination. Minimize waste generation. Optimize energy use. Protect ecosystems.

Special attention is given to practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, helping to mitigate climate change and strengthen the resilience of agricultural communities. By adopting sustainable agricultural practices, farms use essential resources like water and soil more efficiently, promoting a more responsible agriculture aligned with global environmental challenges.

Criterion 7 – Environmental Performance
Criterion 8 – Agricultural Good Practices



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In the context of sustainable crop management, Criteria 7 and 8 highlight the importance of agricultural practices that balance productivity, profitability, and the preservation of natural resources. By adopting diversified and sustainable practices, farms increase their resilience, preparing themselves better to face environmental challenges. The program encourages producers to declare the good practices already in place in cotton cultivation, seeking to demonstrate a balance between production and environmental conservation.

Requirements focus on the efficient use of inputs, the optimization of natural cycles, proper water management, and the reduction of pesticide use. One of the main tools promoted is Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which involves a combination of biological, cultural, and mechanical tactics to control pests, reducing dependence on pesticides. IPM not only decreases the excessive use of chemicals but also helps mitigate insect resistance and the emergence of secondary pests, in addition to reducing production costs.



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IPM follows three basic steps:

1. Evaluation of the agroecosystem, including crop monitoring;
2. Decision-making based on the information collected;
3. Selection of appropriate control methods, such as biological, cultural, behavioral (traps), mechanical, genetic, varietal (resistant plants), and chemical control, when necessary.

This approach contributes to more sustainable management, promoting economic and environmental advantages. The ABR Program, thus, reinforces the importance of agricultural practices that not only increase productivity but also minimize negative impacts on the environment, promoting a balance between agricultural efficiency and the conservation of natural resources.

REFERENCES

<https://ainfo.cnptia.embrapa.br/digital/bitstream/item/97869/1/CIRTEC135.pdf>

<https://imamt.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/manualdeboaspraticas2020-4ed-vf-web.pdf>

<https://www.infoteca.cnptia.embrapa.br/bitstream/doc/863284/1/CIRTEC131.pdf>

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity. It has a growing impact on cotton production, affecting various stages, from crop quality to water availability and soil management. High temperatures, irregular precipitation patterns, and extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods, can significantly reduce productivity, in addition to increasing production costs. These challenges not only threaten the cotton production chain but also jeopardize the livelihoods of communities.

In order to face these impacts, the adoption of more resilient and sustainable agricultural practices becomes increasingly essential. These initiatives must promote resilience, adaptation, and sustainability, aiming to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.

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NATIONAL POLICIES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

In Brazil, the National Policy for Adaptation to Climate Change (PNAC) serves as an important pillar in this process. This plan aims to implement actions that reduce climate risks in the country, seeking to minimize the adverse effects of climate change on society, the economy, and the environment. In the agricultural sector, the PNAC aims to provide tools and information so that rural producers and public managers can make more informed and secure decisions, despite climate uncertainties. The strategy involves access to technologies, technical data, and production processes that favor the implementation of more sustainable and resilient agricultural systems.

In addition to the PNAC, a new "Climate Plan" will be presented in 2025, with the intention of being the main guide for Brazilian actions toward climate neutrality. This new plan will bring national mitigation targets that will be detailed in eight sectoral plans, all based on technical-scientific data and prepared with the active participation of society.

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Within this federal government policy, there are some tools already used by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAPA) as an integrated strategy, aiming to mitigate the impacts of climate change and ensure the continuity of Brazilian agricultural production in an increasingly challenging climate scenario. These tools are the ABC+ Plan and the Agricultural Climate Risk Zoning (ZARC).

The ABC+ Program is another Brazilian public policy aimed at promoting sustainable agricultural practices and adapting agriculture to climate change. The main objective is to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and increase the resilience of agricultural systems between the years 2025 and 2030.

The main strategies used by the program, seeking reduction, are:

- Carbon accumulation in the soil through the adoption of low-carbon agricultural management practices, such as the No-Till System (SPD);
- Recovery of degraded pastures;
- Integrated production systems (which combine crops, livestock, and/or forests in the same area - ILPF);

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- Biological nitrogen fixation;
- Animal waste treatment;
- Forest planting;
- Genetic improvement.

Agricultural Climate Risk Zoning (ZARC) is used to guide crop planting according to climate conditions and the agricultural suitability of different regions, reducing the risks associated with production losses.

Other strategies and actions that can be developed to ensure the sector's resilience are:

- Development of resilient cultivars;
- Conservation of natural resources;
- Promotion of the use of efficient irrigation systems;
- Rural insurance policy;

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- Promotion of digital technologies and real-time climate monitoring, such as moisture sensors and climate forecasting platforms;
- Encouraging agricultural research in institutions such as EMBRAPA (Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation), to develop innovative solutions that increase the sector's adaptation capacity;
- Stimulating the adoption of systems that integrate trees, crops, and livestock, offering ecological and productive benefits.

REFERENCES

<https://antigo.mma.gov.br/clima/politica-nacional-sobre-mudanca-do-clima.html>

<https://www.gov.br/agricultura/pt-br/assuntos/sustentabilidade/planoabc-abcmais>

<https://www.gov.br/agricultura/pt-br/assuntos/riscos-seguro/programa-nacional-de-zoneamento-agricola-de-risco-climatico>

https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2023-2026/2024/Lei/L14904.htm

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ADAPTATION

Adaptation to climate change consists of adjustments in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. Adaptation in agricultural systems has become a central element in policies and research because these systems represent the widest scope of land use occupation on the planet.

Adaptation to climate change in cotton cultivation is crucial, as the crop is highly sensitive to temperature variations, water availability, and soil quality, all of which are affected by these changes.

To face these challenges, it is important to find ways to monitor and minimize the risks and impacts of climate change on cotton fields. Certain techniques and strategies can be implemented to increase the resilience of agricultural systems, allowing them to adapt to transforming climatic conditions, such as unpredictable precipitation patterns, more intense droughts, and rising temperatures. These practices contribute to the protection of ecosystems and ensure the long-term viability of production.

As primary practices, we can cite several adaptation approaches:

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- Selection of Resilient Varieties
- Efficient Water Management
- Soil Conservation Practices
- Sustainable Use of Fertilizers and Pesticides
- Climate Forecasting and Monitoring

Within this theme, the ABR Program guides and encourages participating producers to adopt new practices through audit requirements, which are focused on actions that promote adaptation to climate change.

REFERENCES

https://www.gov.br/mma/pt-br/assuntos/mudanca-do-clima/clima/arquivos/pna_volume-i.pdf

<https://antigo.mma.gov.br/clima/adaptacao/plano-nacional-de-adaptacao.html>

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MITIGATION

Climate change mitigation refers to actions and strategies implemented to reduce or limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions into the atmosphere, in order to decrease the speed and magnitude of global warming.

Mitigation in cotton cultivation is a central issue, as agriculture—combined with forestry and other land uses—contributes substantially to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In cotton farming, there are several strategies that can be adopted to reduce these emissions, increase sustainability, and contribute to mitigating climate impacts. These strategies are designed to minimize environmental effects while ensuring productivity and competitiveness, utilizing market-available technologies with lower costs and environmental impacts.

Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) stands out as an essential tool for climate change mitigation. It integrates strategies to increase agricultural productivity, promote adaptation to climate effects, and reduce or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions associated with agriculture. CSA aims to make agriculture more sustainable, efficient, and resilient, serving as a multifunctional approach to face the challenges imposed by changes in the climate.

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As primary mitigation practices within climate-smart approaches, we have:

- Sustainable Soil Management and No-Till Farming;
- Crop Rotation;
- Efficient Use of Water Resources;
- Management of Fertilizers and Inputs;
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM);
- Precision Agriculture;
- Adoption of Climate-Resilient Plant Varieties;
- Carbon Sequestration and Storage.

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The ABR program establishes specific requirements related to sustainability and climate, with indicators that are evaluated and listed in its guidelines.

REFERENCES

<https://www.gov.br/mma/pt-br/assuntos/mudanca-do-clima/mitigacao#:~:text=O%20novo%20Plano%20Clima%2C%20que,carbono%20rumo%20%C3%A0%20neutralidade%20clim%C3%A1tica.>

https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2023-2026/2024/Lei/L14904.htm



CRITERION 8 **GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES**

**Soil Health
Promotion**



8.1 On the farm, are nutrients applied according to soil needs and crop type (based on regular soil sampling), also considering application timing and dosage and maintaining application records?

Interviews: With the farm representative and employees to determine if the farm performs soil analysis, what the frequency is, and if it covers the entire cotton field or only specific plots each year.

Documentary Analysis: Prove, through the latest soil analyses and the list of fertilizers/correctives applied, if the quantities used are aligned with technical recommendations. These recommendations must follow the harvest management plan prepared by an agronomist duly registered with the CREA.

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8.2 Are alternative methods promoted to reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers?

Interviews: Understand from the person responsible for the sector which alternative methods are used by the farm to increase chemical fertilizer efficiency and if there are projects or collaborations with institutions to test new practices. Verify if soil sampling is performed to quantify and avoid waste.

Documentary Analysis: Documentation and/or records showing implemented practices, such as organic fertilization, use of biofertilizers, or composting, among others.

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8.3 Does the farm have a plan and implement good soil management practices to maintain and improve soil structure, fertility, and nutrient cycles?

Interviews: With the farm representative or employees to determine if the farm uses correctives/fertilizers and adopts conservation practices, such as no-till farming, contour plowing, terracing, minimum tillage, green cover or mulching, the construction of retention basins, and the maintenance of the property's internal roads.

Physical Verification: Evidence the areas to verify if the farm practices no-till, contour plowing, terracing, minimum tillage, green cover or mulching, construction of retention basins, and conservation of internal roads.

Documentary Analysis: Verify the annual or harvest-specific plan for soil preparation and/or fertilization in accordance with the respective soil analysis and the recommendation of an agronomist or field professional.

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8.4 Does the farm adopt management practices that minimize soil erosion in order to protect drinking water sources and other watercourses against surface runoff?

Interviews: With the farm representative or employees regarding practices like no-till, contour plowing, terracing, minimum tillage, green cover or mulching, construction of retention basins, and road maintenance.

Physical Verification: Evidence the areas to verify if the farm practices no-till, contour plowing, terracing, minimum tillage, green cover or mulching, construction of retention basins, and conservation of internal roads. Evaluate whether the farm actively adopts erosion management practices.

Documentary Analysis: Through the harvest plan, check for the implementation of no-till, contour plowing, terracing, minimum tillage, green cover or mulching, and the construction of retention basins.

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8.5 Does the farm adopt management practices that minimize soil erosion in order to protect drinking water sources and other watercourses against surface runoff?

Interviews: With the farm representative responsible for the sector regarding rainfall monitoring and efficient water use practices. Confirm if there is erosion control and rainwater harvesting/reuse.

Documentary Analysis: Proof of rainfall monitoring and/or control, aiming to manage the variable quantity, intensity, and frequency of precipitation.

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8.6 Does the farm implement conservation techniques to preserve the physical, chemical and biological quality of soil?

Interviews: With the farm representative or employees to determine if the farm uses techniques for erosion control, conservation practices, no-till, contour plowing, terracing, minimum tillage, green cover or mulching, construction of retention basins, road maintenance, intercropping (consórcio de culturas), and fire prevention.

Physical Verification: Evidence the areas to verify the practice of no-till, contour plowing, terracing, minimum tillage, green cover or mulching, construction of retention basins, conservation of internal roads, intercropping, and fire prevention measures.

Documentary Analysis: Check the compatibility between adopted practices and soil analysis reports, along with their respective technical recommendations.

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CRITERION 8

GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Integrated Pest
Management



8.7 Does the farm perform ratoon destruction to prevent pest and disease proliferation between crops?

Interviews: With the farm representative or responsible employees to determine if the farm performs stalk destruction and which procedures are utilized by the unit.

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8.8 Does the farm know the sanitary waiting period and follow state defense agency standards during this period?

Interviews: With the farm representative or responsible employees to determine if the farm is aware of the host-free period. Inquire about the specific period in their state and which entity inspects compliance with this requirement.

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8.9 When choosing seeds, does the producer consider pest and disease control? For pests and diseases that do not have genetic control, is there a plan for IPM implementation?

Interviews: With the farm representative or responsible employees to determine if the farm considers pest and disease control when choosing seeds.

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8.10	Does the farm prioritize the use of biological control for the most frequent pests and diseases on its farm, if it has the option of effective products?
Interviews: With the farm representative or responsible employees to determine if the farm prioritizes biological control for the most common pests and diseases when effective options exist.	
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8.11	Does the farm monitor pests and diseases, especially boll weevils, and chemical applications consider monitoring results? Does the farm participate and contribute to state monitoring actions to reduce the cotton boll weevil index?
Interviews: With the farm representative or employees responsible for the sector to determine if the farm monitors pests, especially the boll weevil, and if the applications for this pest are defined based on the data collected. Inquire if the farm participates in technical discussions regarding boll weevil management and implements them.	
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8.12 Does the farm adopt an integrated pest management (IPM) program to keep crop cultivation healthy, preserving beneficial insects and managing resistance of transgenic varieties?

Interviews: With the farm representative or employees to determine if the farm adopts an IPM program.

Physical Verification: Verify if there is crop monitoring, technical follow-up, and control of pests and crop health. To evidence these practices, questions can be directed to pest monitors, or one may request agronomic prescriptions, field notes, or check information regarding the presence of beneficial insects and the use of refuge areas for transgenic varieties.

Documentary Analysis: Monitoring of pests, diseases, weeds, and natural enemies by a qualified technician through random sampling points throughout the plot. These findings must be recorded in spreadsheets and passed to the lead technician or agronomist for decision-making. Documentation should include agronomic recommendations defining the need and type of control, and Service Orders (OS) for pesticide application signed by the responsible professional, specifying the recommended product, quantity, plot, and flow rate.

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8.13 Does the farm have a strategy to prioritize integrated pest and disease management practices to reduce dependence on chemical intervention? Is there a strategy/plan to reduce the use of highly hazardous pesticides?

Interviews: With the farm representative or responsible employees to determine if the farm has any Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy (monitoring/control index, cultural, biological, behavioral, genetic, varietal, and chemical control) for pests and diseases that can assist in reducing the use of chemical products. Seek information from those responsible for the sector regarding whether the unit has a strategy for reducing the use of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs).

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8.14 Does the farm have documentation evidencing that purchased seeds are produced and marketed by producers registered in the National Seed and Seedling Registry – Renasem of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply – MAPA?

Documentary Analysis: Verify the purchase invoices for seeds and their respective RENASEM registration from MAPA.

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8.15 Is it possible to prove that the farm adopts management practices that maximize fiber quality in crop management?

Interviews: With the farm representative or employees to determine if the farm adopts an IPM program.

Physical Verification: Verify if the soil nutrient balance is checked to ensure it does not interfere with fiber quality. Verify if the described IPM plan of the farm is sufficient. Other ways to evidence compliance include: verifying if there is crop monitoring, technical follow-up, and control of pests and crop health. To evidence these practices, questions can be directed to pest monitors, or one may request agronomic prescriptions, field notes, or check information regarding the presence of beneficial insects and the use of refuge areas for transgenic varieties.

Documentary Analysis: Monitoring of pests, diseases, weeds, and natural enemies by a qualified technician through random sampling points throughout the plot. These findings must be recorded in spreadsheets and passed to the lead technician or agronomist for decision-making. Documentation should include agronomic recommendations defining the need and type of control, and Service Orders (OS) for pesticide application signed by the responsible professional, specifying the recommended product, quantity, plot, flow rate, date, etc.

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8.16

Is it possible to prove that cotton is harvested, handled and stored to minimize impurities, damage and contamination during harvest and post-harvest?

Interviews: With the farm representative or employees to understand the process adopted on the farm to minimize impurities, damage, and contamination during and after the harvest.

Physical Verification: In mechanical harvesting, inspect the harvesters, the cotton transport trucks and their protections for transporting large bales and rolls, the bales themselves, and the tarps used to cover them. Verify the storage location of the bales and rolls to ensure they are free from runoff/flooding.



CRITERION 8

GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Pesticide Use
Management



8.17	Does the farm only purchase and use phytosanitary products, agrochemicals, additives, adjuvants and related products prescribed by competent professionals, according to label and package insert indications and registered for cotton cultivation?
LEGAL BASIS: NR 31 item 31.7.3, letter “c”.	Interviews: With the farm representative or employees to determine if the farm only acquires and uses phytosanitary products, agrochemicals, additives, adjuvants, and related products that are registered and authorized by the competent government agencies, prescribed by a qualified professional, and used in accordance with the label and leaflet indications. Physical Verification: Verify if there is inventory control for the pesticides indicated for the cotton crop; if not, inspect the products stored in the pesticide warehouse to cross-reference them with the updated list of commercial names from the labels of pesticides currently in use or to be used. Documentary Analysis: Verification of agronomic prescriptions and corresponding purchase invoices, according to the updated list of commercial names of pesticides in use or to be used, ensuring they are registered for the crop—with the exception of products intended for cotton stalk destruction to comply with the host-free period.
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8.18 Does the farm have records of agrochemical products used, quantity, date and areas where spraying was performed?

Interviews: With the farm representative or employees to determine if the farm maintains an updated list of commercial names for pesticides in use or to be used and the current product stocks.

Physical Verification: Inspect the products stored in the pesticide warehouse to cross-reference them with the updated list of commercial names of pesticides in use or to be used. Verify the application planning.

Documentary Analysis: Verification of the updated list of commercial names of pesticides in use or to be used and existing product stocks. Verify the pesticide application orders signed by the responsible professional.

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8.19 Are sprayings performed based on prior authorization from the responsible technician and field observation and analysis?

Interviews: With the farm representative or employees to determine if sprayings are performed based on prior authorization from the responsible technician and field observation/analysis.

Physical Verification: Verify the farm's described Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan. Other ways to evidence compliance include: verifying if there is crop monitoring, technical follow-up, and control of pests and crop health.

Documentary Analysis: Verify the pesticide application Service Orders (OS) signed by the responsible professional, which must include the recommended product, quantity, plot, flow rate, date, etc.

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8.22 Is it possible to prove that the farm does not use agricultural pesticides listed: (1) in annexes A and B of the Stockholm Convention; (2) in annexes of the Montreal Protocol; and (3) Annex 3 of the Rotterdam Convention?

Access links to the aforementioned lists:

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION - ANNEXES A and B

<https://www.pops.int/TheConvention/ThePOPs/AllPOPs/tabid/2509/Default.aspx>

MONTREAL PROTOCOL

<https://ozone.unep.org/treaties/montreal-protocol/montreal-protocol-substances-deplete-ozone-layer>

ROTTERDAM CONVENTION – ANNEX III

<https://www.pic.int/TheConvention/Chemicals/AnnexIIIChecklist/tabid/1132/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Focus on active ingredients that fall under these conventions, which may be registered in Brazil and were reported by Brazilian farms in years prior to this commitment. Examples: Carbofuran, Methamidophos, Parathion, Sulfluramid, Terbufos, Thiram.

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EXCLUSIVE BCI 

8.23 Is it possible to prove that the farm does not use agricultural pesticides whose composition contains: (1) Fenpropathrin, (2) Azocyclotin, (3) Beta Cyfluthrin?

Interviews: Speak with the technical managers and farm administrators to understand the procedures adopted in the selection and use of agricultural pesticides.

Documentary Verification: Request pesticide purchase records, such as invoices and product entry logs, to verify which products were acquired by the farm and if they contain prohibited substances. Ascertain if the farm has internal procedures that ensure the non-use of pesticides with these compositions as a purchasing criterion.

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8.24

Does the farm have a strategy to discontinue the use of pesticides listed as carcinogenic I (category 1A or 1B), mutagenic I (category 1B) or toxic to reproduction I (category 1B) by the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) by 2027, in addition to identifying other control alternatives to replace these?

Interviews: With the technical manager for the sector to ascertain if there is a specific plan to reduce the use of the pesticides described in the requirement. Are there alternative products already in use to replace these pesticides? Active ingredients related to the item?

Discontinued by 2027): Methomyl, Abamectin, Fentin Hydroxide, Lambda-cyhalothrin, Bifenthrin, Chlorothalonil, Carbendazim, Cyproconazole, Chlorpyrifos, Epoxiconazole, Ammonium Glufosinate, Mancozeb, MSMA, Propiconazole, Thiacloprid, Carbosulfan.