

Procedure for completing Digital FHCUs – For Participating Technical Advisors

The Farmland Health Check-Up (FHCU) is a unique educational opportunity for producers to discuss soil health and Best Management Practices (BMPs) on their farm with a technical specialist. OSCIA is pleased to be launching a new, online version of the FHCU. Available in both English and French, the digital FHCU offers a streamlined approach to targeted BMP planning while also increasing the overall quality of completed workbooks. Without changing the integrity of the FHCU, the digital FHCU also includes content updates, increasing the relevancy of the tool to today's agricultural practices. The procedure to complete the digital FHCU workbook remains similar to the current fillable PDF version, although some steps have become more streamlined.

While the current fillable PDF version of the FHCU could be completed remotely, the digital FHCU offers several enhancements and supports the current physical distancing guidelines.

How does completing the digital FHCU remotely work?

- A producer initiates contact with a participating CCA or P.Ag technical specialist to express interest in completing a FHCU.
- The participating CCA or P.Ag technical specialist may suggest completing the FHCU remotely to support the current physical distancing guidelines. Together the producer and technical specialist agree on a time to meet over a video call. Choosing a platform that allows screen sharing is ideal, if available.
- The technical specialist is responsible for ensuring the producer gathers the appropriate information beforehand (e.g. EFP, soil tests, yield data, etc.)
 - Completing the FHCU remotely means that the CCA or P.Ag does not need to spend time travelling to the producer's farm.
- Through screen sharing, the producer and technical specialist (CCA or P.Ag) work through the online workbook questions in the digital FHCU sequentially.
 - The website has a simple layout so the producer and technical specialist may work through the workbook to collect information.
 - The producer's responses to workbook questions are automatically saved after each question to avoid lost information.
 - The digital FHCU highlights which specific BMPs and sections have low ratings, allowing for easier tailoring of recommendations for the fields being assessed.
 - After completion, the workbook can be exported for easy sharing with the producer.
- The website has been designed for ease of access in rural areas with limited or slow internet.
 - If internet access is problematic, a printed hard copy or PDF version of the digital FHCU workbook is available for the producer and technical advisor to work through to collect information. Data entry of the workbook into the digital FHCU website can occur once the CCA or P.Ag returns to a stable internet connection.

Note that the digital FHCU is replacing the current fillable PDF version. After physical distancing guidelines change, the digital FHCU may continue to be completed by video call or technical specialist may return to in-person, kitchen-table style discussions with the producer. The digital FHCU will continue to offer a more streamlined approach compared to the current fillable PDF version.

- The digital FHCU incorporates several validating steps, to avoid missing key areas which will increase the overall quality of submitted workbooks.

Should you have questions, please contact fhu@ontariosoilcrop.org