

## GROWER | Section 1: Getting Oriented | 4: Preparations and Practices

You've mapped your climate pattern, your water sources and losses, and your soil's water-holding capacity. This section is where that context becomes action. The pattern-to-strategy table connects what you found to practice areas worth exploring. The checklist below will help you take stock of what you're already doing. And the Putting It Into Practice prompts help you name one focused next step. Start by identifying what you're already doing to see what is working and what you can integrate into your plan.

### Activity — What are you already doing?

Check the box next to the strategies you are already implementing, even partially. This is a good starting point for deciding what practices you would like to explore to improve water resilience on your farm.

#### Soil health & moisture conservation

- Compost / amendments
- Cover cropping
- Mulching
- No-till / reduced till
- Promote deep rooting (dry farming or deep/infrequent irrigation rather than shallow/frequent)
- Organic matter addition
- Soil surface cultivation
- Diligent weed control

#### Water management

- Dry farming / non-irrigated
- Efficient use of irrigation (regular system maintenance, data-driven irrigation scheduling, etc.)
- Drip / subsurface irrigation
- Rainwater collection
- Slowing and retaining water (earthworks)
- Soil moisture monitoring
- Graywater / recycled water
- Bioswales / stormwater management

#### Ecosystem and landscape design

- Beaver habitat or dam analogs
- Catchment ponds
- Contour strip cropping
- Earthworks / keyline design
- Hedgerows / windbreaks

- Riparian restoration
- Upland habitat management
- Terracing

Crop selection, planting, and cultivation

- Seed saving – Adapting plants to the local environment over time
- Drought-tolerant or early-maturing cultivars
- Intercropping / interplanting
- Native plants
- Perennials
- Direct seeding
- Transplanting
- Reduced planting density

*Now look at the boxes you left unchecked. Circle any practice that could address a limitation or vulnerability you identified in your climate, water, or soil assessment. Those are your starting candidates for this season.*

Before selecting practices to explore, work through these questions:

- Is any soil rehabilitation or healing needed before new practices will work well?
- What equipment and infrastructure do you currently have available?
- Were there any themes across your Section 1 activities that pointed toward a specific strategy area?
- Are there any boxes you left unchecked that could help address limitations you found in your climate, water, or soil assessment?

*Continued on next page...*

From pattern to strategy

Match the row or rows that most closely describe your farm. Most growers will recognize themselves in more than one. Check the box next to each one that applies. Use this information as a starting point, not a prescription.

If your climate pattern looks like this...	✓	Strategy areas worth exploring first
Reliable wet season followed by a long, predictable dry season (3–5+ consecutive months below 1 inch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dry farming trials; deep soil building for water storage; planting timing and variety selection matched to the dry window
Dry season present but shorter or more variable – some years severe, others much less so	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible irrigation management; soil moisture monitoring to guide decisions; cover crops and mulch to extend soil moisture; drought-tolerant variety exploration
High year-to-year variability – difficult to predict what the season will bring	<input type="checkbox"/>	Practices robust across a range of conditions: organic matter building, diverse cover cropping, water storage, monitoring tools, crop and variety diversification
High evaporative demand throughout the growing season – hot, windy, exposed site	<input type="checkbox"/>	Windbreaks and shelterbelts; shade structures or strategic interplanting; mulch; early-morning irrigation timing; reduced planting density in highest-exposure areas
Seasonal flooding or waterlogging in wet months alongside dry-season stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drainage and soil structure management alongside water retention, earthworks, contour strip cropping, and organic matter to improve both drainage and moisture retention in dry conditions

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

- Which row in the table most closely describes your farm’s situation? Check it. That row is your starting frame for practice selection.
- From the practices you circled in the checklist: which one is most realistic to explore or refine this season given your current resources, labor, and time?
- What is one thing you’ll observe or document this season to know whether the practice is working?