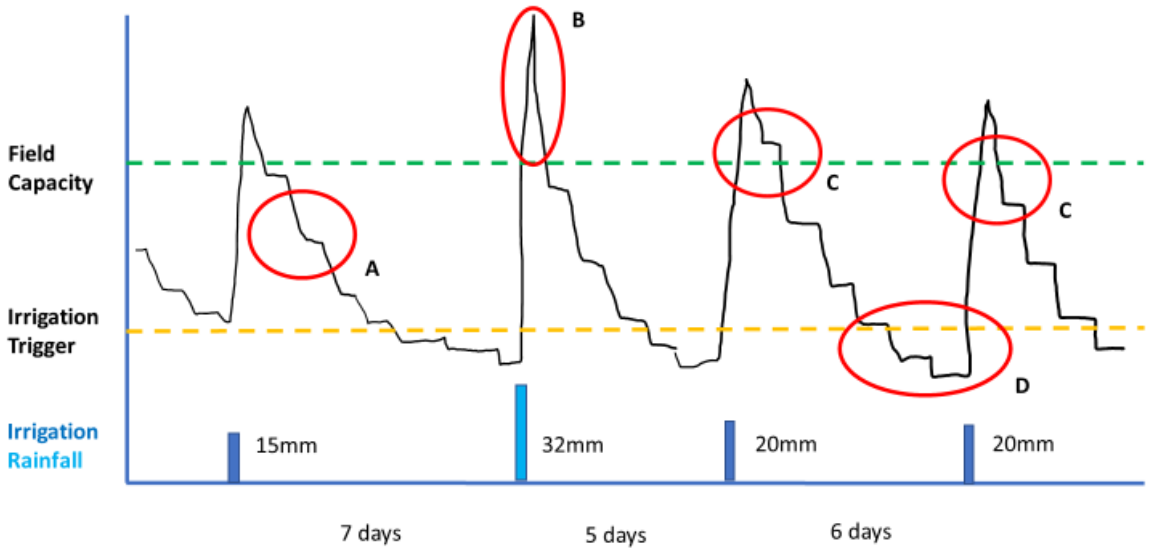
Knowledge Hub:
#5 Soil Moisture Trace

Being able to interpret what your soil moisture sensor data is telling you is key for successful irrigation.

The diagram below shows a typical soil moisture trace and an explanation of the key points is below this.



A. Plants use water during the day but not at night. This results in a stepping effect on the soil moisture trace. The vertical part of the step shows when the plant is using water (day) and the horizontal part of the step shows periods of no water use (night).

B. When the soil is saturated there is a spike above the field capacity line. Periods of saturation can impact upon crop production as most crops, particularly in heavy soil types, become dormant.

C. An indication of the soils field capacity is given by looking at when the first step in the soil moisture trace occurs and then drawing a best fit line.

D. As soil moisture drops below the stress point the soil moisture trace starts to level out. Depending on your irrigation strategy, the irrigation trigger can be set both above and below the stress point.