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**Re: MANURE SPREADING ADVISORY #2 - 2008: SOUTH COASTAL REGION**

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**Date: March 5, 2008**

The following advisory is produced by government, in partnership with industry, to provide guidance to farmers regarding the *Agricultural Waste Control Regulation* and the *ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACT*. If a discrepancy arises between this document and the legislation, the legislation takes precedence. Following this advisory does not relieve anyone from their obligations under the LEGISLATION. The Province of British Columbia does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of the information referenced here from legislation, and in no event is the Province liable or responsible for damages of any kind arising out of its use.

**With milder weather in the past few weeks, perennial crops (especially grasses) are greening up and will now benefit from application of nutrients.**

**However, with soils still very wet and some rain in the long range forecast, producers are reminded to use careful judgment in deciding when to apply manure. Suitability of manure application at this time is very site specific and decisions need to be made on a case by case basis.**

**Please read the entire advisory as it contains important information to assist producers with decision-making about manure application.**

**Current Conditions:**

**Weather:** As of March 5, the long range forecast is for mixed weather conditions.

**Soil:** Soil moisture is moist to saturated. Soil temperature in Abbotsford is at about 9°C.

**Crops:** Cool-season grasses and legumes are starting to green up.

**Environmental Risks from Manure Application:**

The principal environmental risks associated with manure application at this time are:

- surface runoff of manure nutrients and pathogens to water courses
- short-circuit flow of manure nutrients and pathogens to water courses through drain-tiles
- soil compaction from operating heavy equipment on fields that are very wet
- nitrate leaching if excessive rains follow application, potentially resulting in ground water contamination

**Nutrient Benefits from Manure Application:**

As long as runoff risks are avoided, nutrients from manure applied at this time on well-established grassland will be largely conserved and available for crop requirements.

**Avoiding Overflowing Manure Pits:** It is recognized that some producers may be faced with potentially overflowing manure pits. Allowing any uncontrolled release of manure is likely a contravention of the Environmental Management Act. If field conditions are not suitable for manure application, producers are strongly advised to identify temporary alternatives, including neighbours who may have extra capacity in their manure storage facilities.

**Producers are responsible for decisions regarding manure spreading.** Legislation does not give specific dates for manure spreading, but allows for the use of manure as a fertilizer, and does not allow for manure to be spread in a manner that causes pollution.

Further information for specific crops is provided below:

### **Perennial Grassland and Well-Established Cover Crops**

If manure is to be applied, extreme caution must be used, considering the following recommendations:

- only apply manure when soil is trafficable and there is no significant precipitation forecast for the next 5 days (e.g. less than 10 mm of precipitation as rain)
- apply at rates matched to crop nutrient requirements (suggested maximum rate of 60 kg/ha of manure nitrogen which is equivalent to about 2000 gal/ac with liquid dairy manure)
- maintain adequate setbacks to watercourses to avoid runoff (at this time of year, suggested minimum setback distance is 5 to 10 metres, depending on a variety of factors including weather, topography, soil conditions and rate of application)
- do not apply manure to tile-drained fields, particularly if water is currently flowing through the drain tiles
- do not apply manure to areas of fields that are frozen or saturated
- do not apply manure to areas of fields that are subject to flooding or runoff
- if applying manure to reduce the risk of overflowing manure storage, only apply enough to gain adequate storage capacity until application conditions are better

### **Bare land:**

No manure application is recommended at this time.

### **Berry Crops:**

If field conditions allow, manure application to meet crop nutrient needs for this time of year is acceptable. When applying manure, utilize precautionary measures listed under Perennial Grassland. In addition to the above measures, preference should be given to those fields that have a cover crop between the berry crop rows.

### **Additional Resources:**

#### **Canada-BC Environmental Farm Plan Program:**

Trained Planning Advisors are available to assist producers with completing an Environmental Farm Plan. Some of the delivery groups and their contacts for the Coastal Region are mentioned below:

- BC Milk Producers' Association <http://www.bcmilkproducers.ca/>, Dave Melnychuk, 604-534-2639
- Mainland Fruit and Vegetables EFP Delivery Group, Jyl Singh 604-807-5659
- Poultry Administration, Allen James, 604-795-7656

A complete contact list is available through the BC Agriculture Council website at the link below:  
[http://www.bcac.bc.ca/EFP\\_pages/contact\\_us/index.html](http://www.bcac.bc.ca/EFP_pages/contact_us/index.html)

**Agricultural Waste Control Regulation:**

This is the actual legislation that applies to manure management in British Columbia.  
[http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/req/E/EnvMgmt/131\\_92.htm](http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/req/E/EnvMgmt/131_92.htm)

For further information, please contact:

BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

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For questions of a regulatory nature, please contact:

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