

Re: MANURE SPREADING ADVISORY #1 - 2009: SOUTH COASTAL REGION

Date: February 9, 2009

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.

In general, manure application on any crops is not yet advised.

Producers are responsible for decisions regarding manure spreading. Legislation gives no specific dates for manure spreading, but it does not allow for manure to be spread in a manner that causes pollution.

Please read the entire advisory for details and important information to assist producers with decision-making about manure application.

Current Conditions (as of February 9)

Weather: Below average temperatures are forecast for the next 14 days for Abbotsford. The five-day forecast calls for possible rain and flurries in the next two days, followed by clear or cloudy skies.

Soil: Soil is moist and soil temperature in Abbotsford is about 3°C.

Crops: Perennial grass and cover crops are just beginning to show signs of new growth. The T-Sum for Abbotsford is 96. Research has shown a correlation between T-Sum reaching 200 and optimal timing for the first fertilizer application on grasses.

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

The “Manure Spreading Advisory Committee” (consisting of industry and government representatives) recognizes that some farmers might not have adequate capacity in their manure storage facilities to hold their current and accumulating levels of manure. If runoff risks are avoided, nutrients from manure applied at this time on well-established grassland will be largely conserved and available for future crop requirements.

The Manure Spreading Advisory Committee is not advising any manure application yet. It will monitor weather and soil conditions and will issue further advisories as conditions improve.

Avoiding Overflowing Manure Pits. 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. Until field conditions are 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. This is a good time for farmers to be walking their fields and assessing crop and soil conditions. This way, they will know which fields will be the first ones suitable for manure application when conditions improve.

Perennial Grassland

Manure application is not advised at this time. However, if it is necessary to apply manure to avoid the environmental risk of overflowing manure storage facilities, it is strongly advised to follow these recommendations:

- 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, apply only enough to gain adequate storage capacity until application conditions improve
- Protect surface waters from runoff by maintaining adequate setbacks to watercourses. At this time of year, suggested minimum setback distance is 10 metres (33 feet). This distance should be increased 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
- Apply at rates matched to crop nutrient requirements (suggested maximum rate of 60 kg/ha of manure nitrogen which is about 2000 gal/ac of liquid dairy manure)
- Apply manure only when soil is trafficable and there is no significant rain (i.e. greater than 10 mm of rain or its equivalent in snow) forecast for any of the next 5 days

Harvested annual crops (including corn & vegetables), bare land and berry crops

No manure application is recommended at this time.

