

Re: MANURE SPREADING ADVISORY #2 - 2009: SOUTH COASTAL REGION

Date: April 6, 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.

Manure application conditions have improved since the last advisory and careful manure application is now suitable on many sites.

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 Apr 6, 2009)

Weather: Sunny, warm weather is expected to turn to mild, wet weather by this week's end. Generally, producers are advised to wait for a "dry spell"¹ before manure application.

Soil: Soils are generally moist. The soil temperature in Abbotsford is about 10°C.

Crops: For most perennial grass and cover-cropped fields, the crop is at a suitable stage for receiving nutrients.

Principal environmental risks associated with manure application

- 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

¹ The term "dry spell" refers here to a period when the 5 day weather forecast does not include any significant precipitation (e.g. greater than 10 mm as rain). It may include a few days where the forecast is for "chance of showers."

Given the current conditions and above risks, the “Manure Spreading Advisory Committee” (consisting of industry and government representatives) is advising that **careful manure application is suitable on many sites**. The committee will monitor weather and soil conditions and will issue further advisories as conditions change.

Perennial Grassland and Well-Established Cover Crops

It is strongly advised to follow these recommendations:

- 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
- Do not apply manure to areas of fields that are saturated or frozen
- Do not apply manure to areas of fields that are subject to flooding or runoff
- Protect surface waters from runoff by maintaining adequate setbacks to watercourses. The suggested minimum setback distance is 5 metres (16 feet) at this time of year. This distance should be increased depending on a variety of factors including weather, topography, soil conditions and rate of application.
- Apply at rates matched to crop nutrient requirements
- Do not apply manure to tile-drained fields, particularly if water is currently flowing through the drain tiles

Bare land

Application to bare land should be considered only for soils that are trafficable and for which a new crop will be planted soon to use the applied nutrients (i.e. within two to three weeks of manure spreading). Manure should be injected or incorporated as soon as possible after application to reduce odour from ammonia loss into the air. If applying manure, use precautionary measures listed under Perennial Grassland.

Berry crops

If field conditions allow, manure application to meet crop nutrient needs for this time of year is acceptable. Rates of application should follow berry industry guidelines (less than 100 kg N/ha). If applying manure, utilize precautionary measures listed under Perennial Grassland.

