

Re: **MANURE SPREADING ADVISORY #4 - 2009: SOUTH COASTAL REGION**

Date: November 2, 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 after November 1 is not advised. See below for advice on avoiding overflowing manure pits.

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.

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

Given the above risks, the Manure Spreading Advisory Committee (consisting of industry and government representatives) is **not advising manure application on any crops after November 1, in general**. The committee will monitor weather and soil conditions and will issue further advisories as conditions change.

Avoiding Overflowing Manure Pits. Some producers may be faced with potentially overflowing manure pits. Producers should plan to have enough manure storage; the reason for overflowing pits could be unforeseen circumstances such as excessive rainfall.

See the next page for guidance...

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. If all else fails, contact the **Ministry of Agriculture and Lands** or the **Ministry of Environment** (contact info below) for further advice.

Given the above risks, the “Manure Spreading Advisory Committee” (consisting of industry and government representatives) is **not advising any manure application at this time**. However, the Committee recognizes that the environmental risks of careful manure application (see below) are likely less than the environmental risks of overflowing manure storage facilities in winter.

Perennial Grassland

If grass is actively growing (average daily temperature is above 5°C), it may be acceptable to spread manure using these following guidelines:

- 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). Analyzing a manure sample for nutrients would help verify the nitrogen content of the manure.
- 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
- Protect surface waters from runoff by maintaining adequate setbacks to watercourses. At this time of year, the suggested minimum setback distance is 10 metres (33 feet), as in the Environmental Farm Plan Reference Guide. This distance should be increased depending on a variety of factors including weather, topography, soil conditions and rate of application.
- 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 tile-drained fields, particularly if water is currently flowing through the drain tiles

Harvested Annual Crops (including corn and vegetables), Recently Seeded Cover Crops and Berry Crops

No manure application is recommended at this time.

Additional Resources

Canada-BC Environmental Farm Plan Program:

Trained Planning Advisors are available to assist producers with completing an Environmental Farm Plan. For more information contact the ARDCorp office in Abbotsford.

- toll free 1-866-522-3447 or 604-854-4483
- http://www.ardcorp.ca/index.php?page_id=14

Agricultural Waste Control Regulation:

This is the actual legislation that applies to manure management in British Columbia.

http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/reg/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:

BC Ministry of Environment

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