

Re: MANURE SPREADING ADVISORY #1 - 2011: SOUTH COASTAL REGION

Date: February 1, 2011

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 or fields 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 and storage.

Current Conditions, as an indication of manure application suitability

Weather: Light rain (10 mm or more) is forecast for three of the next five days in Abbotsford. Check your local weather forecast.

Soil: Soil temperature is about 3°C in Abbotsford.

Crops: The T-Sum for Abbotsford is 123. When the T-Sum increases to 200, that is one indication of optimal timing for the first fertilizer application on well-established grasses (see farmwest.com). Also consider crop growth: there have been few signs of early growth in perennial grass and cover crop fields so far.

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...

Now is a good time for producers to walk their fields to assess crop and soil conditions. This way, they will know which fields will be the first ones suitable for manure application.

Allowing any uncontrolled release of manure is likely a contravention of the Environmental Management Act. If overflowing manure pits cannot be avoided, producers are strongly advised to identify temporary alternatives to manure spreading, including neighbours who may have extra capacity in their manure storage facilities. If alternative storage options for excess manure are not available, careful manure application under appropriate conditions (see below) is an option that likely presents lesser environmental risks than overflowing or leaking manure storage facilities.

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

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 any manure application at this time**.

Perennial Grassland and Well-Established Cover Crops

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:

- Apply only enough manure to avoid overflowing manure pits (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.
- 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 areas of fields that are frozen or saturated
- Do not apply manure to areas of fields that are subject to flooding or runoff
- Do not apply manure to tile-drained fields, particularly if water is currently flowing through the drain tiles

Bare land and berry crops

No manure application is recommended at this time.

