

FARM PRACTICES NON-AGRICULTURAL WASTE

Description

Non-agricultural waste can be used as a fertilizer or as a soil conditioner. Sources of non-agricultural wastes vary widely and not all are acceptable for use as soil amendments. The use of non-agricultural waste is regulated by the *Waste Management Act*. The Act includes regulations and guidelines which address such concerns as the health of humans, animals, plants and the ecology of application sites. Non-agricultural wastes which are commonly used on farms in BC include biosolids, effluent and woodwaste.

Biosolid and Effluent Reuse

Biosolid reuse is defined as the application of municipal waste water treatment system solids (sewage sludge) to farmland. Biosolids add organic matter to the soil and replace nutrients removed by crops. They provide a wide range of plant-available macro- and micro-nutrients and improve soil tilth. Any application of biosolids or effluent to farm land must meet the conditions specified in the approval or permit issued under the *Waste Management Act* in a Liquid Waste Management Plan.

Effluent Use for Irrigation

Climatic moisture deficits occur in many parts of BC during the summer months. In these areas, crops must be irrigated to achieve maximum production. Municipal effluent and effluent from food processing plants can be applied to land by irrigation. The Code of Practice for the Use of Reclaimed Water must be adhered to.

Woodwaste

Refer to the specific woodwaste types and uses are identified in the Farm Practice - Woodwaste.

Nuisance Concerns

The three main disturbances mentioned in the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* are odour, noise and dust. Of particular concern to practices surrounding application the use of non-agricultural wastes are odour and dust.

Odour

Farmers engage in a variety of activities that produce odours. Many non-agricultural wastes used as fertilizers or soil conditioners can release some odours. How people perceive the odour (nuisance or not) will depend on the frequency, intensity, duration and offensiveness of the odour, how well they smell and personal experiences associated with odour.

See Nuisance Reference: [Odour](#)

Dust

Farmers engage in a variety of activities that require the use of equipment or practices that will create dust. Dust may also be generated as 'fugitive dust' when fine particulate is lifted from fields, roads, buildings and yards by the stirring action of air. Many non-agricultural wastes applications can create dust. Dust in the air is defined as fine grained suspended particulate. How people perceive dust (nuisance or not) will depend on the frequency, intensity and duration of the dust generating event.

See Nuisance Reference: [Dust](#)

Activities and Operations

Irrigation

Non-agricultural waste, particularly effluents, should be applied following the principles of irrigation. Infiltration rate and runoff should be monitored.

Fertilizers and Soil Conditioners

Because effluent contains plant available nutrients, farmers irrigating with effluent should account for those nutrients when applying effluent to crop land. Because biosolids contain plant available nutrients, farmers should account for the nutrients applied to crop land from biosolids when determining crop nutrient requirements.

Placement of Fill

The *Agricultural Land Reserve Permit Regulation* exempts a person from having a permit to place "fill" if the activity involves the application of fertilizers, manures, composts, mulches or soil conditioners in accordance with good agricultural practice. For specified farm and non-farm uses, including the construction and maintenance of greenhouses, farm building or structure for use in an intensive livestock operation or for mushroom production, an aquaculture facility, or a composting facility, with conditions, and where the removal of soil or placement of fill exceeds 2% of the area of the parcel, a 'Notice of Intent' must be submitted to the Agricultural Land Commission. Proposals under the 'Notice of Intent' must be submitted to the Agricultural Land Commission. Proposals under the 'Notice of Intent' may be allowed with terms and conditions set by the CEO of the Commission or require an approval of the Commission.

Legislation

Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C. Acts, regulations and bylaws that regulate or may affect non-agricultural waste use practices include, but are not limited to, the following:

Federal

Fisheries Act – protects fish and fish habitat and prohibits the discharge of deleterious substances into waters frequented by fish

Provincial

Waste Management Act – protects environment (soil, water & air) from pollution

Production and Use of Compost Regulation – provides minimum standards to follow when composting or using compost made from non-agricultural wastes

Special Waste Regulation – minimum standards for handing and disposal of 'dangerous goods' such as batteries waste oil or solvents and waste asbestos from buildings

Municipal Sewage Regulation

Organic Matter Recycling Regulation – regulates the beneficial use of organic matter

Code of Practice for the Use of Reclaimed Water – regulates the use of reclaimed water

Publications

Publications that provide further information on non-agricultural waste include, but are not limited to, the following (refer to Appendix D for details):

Code of Practice for the Use of Reclaimed Water

Biosolids Management Guidelines for British Columbia - Draft February 2000