

FARM PRACTICES

FARMSTEAD MAINTENANCE

Description

The majority of British Columbia farms are occupied and well cared for. Occasionally, a farmstead or field may not be properly maintained. Agricultural land that has been neglected for one or more consecutive years by the owner or lessee may create problems for neighbors. The most common problem is the development of an uncontrolled population of pests, including insects, weeds, plants, diseases, and rodents. These pests may spread onto neighboring farms and non-farm properties. Owners of these properties must then incur additional expense to protect their land, plants or animals. Neglected farms may also produce crops that lure wildlife into areas that may, in turn, become unsafe for the human population.

Activities and Operations

Pests

Various practices may be employed to prevent or minimize pests and other problems on both abandoned and neighboring farms and non-farm properties. Some practices focus on controlling the pest or its hosts. Other practices alter the habitat to discourage the pests. Abandoned host plants should be destroyed and replaced by plants that will not harbor the species of pests causing the problem (unless the pests are going to be controlled). Rodents and insects should also be controlled.

See Farm Practice: Pest Management

Erosion

Watercourses should have appropriate riparian vegetation to prevent streambank erosion. Fields should also be cover cropped to prevent wind or water erosion.

Safety

Uninhabited houses and unused buildings should be sealed against entry, or demolished. Neglected buildings or derelict structures may also be unsafe.

Dumping

Abandoned farms should not become dumping grounds for undesirable materials like broken concrete slabs, used asphalt, old cars, etc.

Related Farm Practices

Other farm practices that pertain to farmstead maintenance include, but are not limited to, the following:

Burning

Brush, weeds, crop residue, prunings, etc. may be disposed of through burning.

Crop Residue Management

Harvested, pruned or processed vegetable crops may result in crop residue.

Drainage

Surface water ponding, runoff, overgrown or plugged ditches and drainage outlets need to be maintained, especially if the drainage channel is the outlet for other properties.

Farmstead Refuse

Not all on farm solid wastes are agriculture wastes. Examples are: plastic, glass, metal, wood, paper, cardboard and media. Care must be taken to ensure proper handling.

Pesticides

Due to the potential for environmental harm, governments regulate pesticide use.

Pest Management

Pest problems may arise from unmanaged crops, manure and feed.

Weed Control

The control of weeds is used for a number of reasons; suppression, prevention eradication, etc. Cultivated or disturbed areas should be planted to grass or other plants so that the establishment of weeds is prevented.

Wildlife Damage Control

Wildlife from unmaintained farms can disrupt and damage neighbouring crops and land.

Legislation

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

Provincial

Plant Protection Act – Provides for the prevention of the spread of pests destructive to plants

Weed Control Act – Puts responsibility for the control of noxious weeds on the occupant

Local government

Local government bylaws may address unsightly premises and the control of weeds and pests.

Publications

Publications that provide further information on farmstead maintenance include, but are not limited to, the following (refer to Appendix D for details):

British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Reference Guide

Production Guides for (various commodities)