

Manure Application Setback Distances

When applying manure, remember to follow the manure application setback guidance in your Plan. These setbacks will help you avoid applying too close to a waterbody or sensitive area when the risk of runoff is high.

When in doubt, stay back **40 feet** from all waterways and increase that to **80 feet** from October 1 - February 28. (See table below for seasonal distance recommendations).

A big gun applicator should NEVER be closer than **40 feet** at any time of the year due to drift.

These guidelines apply to liquid and solid manures.

Manure application setback guidelines for Whatcom are based on scientific studies which recommend specific distances for sediment and nutrient removal based on seasonal precipitation conditions.

A distance of 40 feet has been shown to be most effectual under our spring and fall rain events, while we allow that distance to be reduced to 10 feet in the dry summer months when the chance of runoff is slight.

The distance is increased to 80 feet in the late fall through the winter to be protective against periods of heavy, prolonged rain events, and/or saturated soils



which require greater distances to be treated prior to reaching a waterway. Application during this risky time can readily move surface applied manure from your field if you're not careful.

If you have a discharge due to poor management, the EPA CAFO permit will put you under a 100 foot setback for all times of the year.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr 1/15	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
80'	80'	40'	40'/10'*	10'	10'	10'	10'	40'	80'	80	80

*This is a floating date and should be evaluated based on current weather and forecast information. Check the website for the current recommend setback distance.

If you would like email updates on current weather alerts, manure application tips and timing, and other important information, please email us your request and we will put you on the list (nembertson@whatcomcd.org). (This list will NOT be distributed).



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Coming Up in the Next Issue:

- Taking digestate? Know what your responsibilities are
- What triggers the need for a dairy plan update?
- What does your Fall nitrate test mean and how to use it next year



A Connection to the Whatcom Dairy Community

Whatcom Dairy News

Cost Assistance Available

Want to install a new technology, or practice, but can't afford it on your own?

The WA State Cost Share and NRCS EQIP programs may be able to help!

Come into the NRCS office and sign up at any time. You can talk with NRCS or WCD about what type of programs and funding support is available and see if it is right for you.

Tire Removal Opportunity

Have old tires that you want removed?

The Dept of Ecology and Dept. of Health are partnering to come and help remove those old tires from your place at no cost.

If you are interested, contact us at WCD or Bill Angel at Dept of Health (360-676-6724 ext. # 50831) by **September 14th**.

Whatcom Dairy Speaker Series

***NEW* Event coming to Whatcom this fall!**

Meetings will be the third Thursday of the month from 12:00-1:30. Free lunch will be provided. Registration/RSVP is requested to gauge lunch requirements, but not required.

The Whatcom Conservation District, Washington State University Extension, and the Washington Dairy Federation are partnering to bring Whatcom dairy farmers an informational Dairy Speaker Series starting in September 2012.

This is a free monthly meeting provided to dairy farmers in Whatcom County (but farmers from all counties are welcome) to bring information on production, science, and topics of interest. Experts will be

brought in to share new and emerging research and topics, and be available to answer questions afterwards.

An open discussion time and producer forum will follow each presenter to allow farmers to share their ideas and feedback on the monthly topic. This is a great opportunity for producers to share their innovations, get expert advice, and increase their understanding of new science, technology, and production practices.

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Preparing for Fall

Its time to start preparing for Fall farm needs

Field work is in full swing, but there is no time like the present to also start to prepare for the coming wet season.

Fall in Whatcom County brings a shift from very dry weather to very wet weather, sometimes leading to surface runoff and/or on-farm flood events. There are a few things you can do on-farm now to prepare for

this change and prevent any type of pollution event.

Make sure your lagoon banks are intact and repair any dike erosion or animal damage. Prepare to divert concentrated silage leachate into your lagoon for the first two months. Make sure gutters are repaired and functioning, and all roof panels in place. □

Whatcom Dairy Speaker Series

In addition, brief updates on emerging topics, research participation opportunities, and upcoming rules and regulations will be provided to keep the dairy industry on top of current events.

Producers are welcome to give feedback and request speakers and topics at any time.

Through active participation and collaboration, this speaker series will be a great success!

Want to request a topic or speaker? Let us know and we will bring them in!

Upcoming Topics

Topics will focus on the science, effectiveness, practicality, and economics of the issue. Here are some upcoming topics to look forward to:

- Waste Storage Structures
- Soil Quality and Management
- Crop Rotations
- Animal Production/Welfare
- Manure Application Risk Management
- Dairy Nutrition
- Cover and Relay Crops
- Forage and Pastures
- Information Technologies
- Animal Herd Health
- Mortality Management and Composting
- Disease and Pathogens

Meeting Information

- Meetings will be on the “Third Thursday” of the month.
- **The first speaker will be Thursday, September 21, 2012 from 12:00-1:30.**
- There is no charge for the event and a free lunch will be provided!
- More information on upcoming speakers and topics will sent out via postcards or email. If your not on our mailing list, let us know and we will sign you up.
- You can also check our website under “**Dairy Speaker Series**” for the latest information on speakers and upcoming topics.

NEW! Manure Spreading Advisory

Your first line of defense is good manure application practices

The Whatcom Conservation District has put up a new tool for farmers in Whatcom County called the Manure Spreading Advisory (MSA). Modeled off of a system developed in Wisconsin, this advisory tool can help you avoid times when manure should not be applied, and identify times when application is low risk.

The advisory is updated every morning so that you have a real-time look into current risk factors for manure application. Use the MSA as a first step in making decisions about when you should apply manure. If the risk is low or medium, move on to assessing your field conditions to see if manure application is okay for a specific field on that day. If used correctly, this tool can help you avoid any potential runoff issues and keep your manure on your field where it belongs.

Remember: if the risk is high, don't apply!

Find the MSA at: <http://whatcomcd.org/manure-spreading-advisory>

Manure Spreading Advisory

The following manure spreading advisory should be used in conjunction with your Nutrient Management Plan and application guidance to help you determine when applying manure is advisable. Remember: **If the risk is high, don't apply!**

How to use this map
Click on your farm location on the map below to receive the risk rating and application guidance for your specific area. Risk is based on the 72 hour precipitation forecast for a given area. This value best predicts the potential risk associated with movement of manure applied to a field. This advisory is the first step in assessing if your field conditions are suitable for manure application and should be followed up with observation of your field characteristics to determine if manure application is appropriate at any time of the year. The ARM worksheet will help you take the next step to assess the risk associated with application to individual fields.

Click here for a LARGER map

Date	24hr Prediction Forecast (inch)	72hr Prediction Forecast (inch)	Risk
2012-08-23	0.08	0.13	Med
2012-08-24	0.05	0.05	Low
2012-08-25	0	0	Low
2012-08-26	0	9999	To Far Out
2012-08-27	0	9999	To Far Out

Current Manure Spreading Guidance: Assess fields prior to each application. Always check the three day precipitation forecast before applying to fields to help reduce the chance of having a runoff event.

Start Planning Now for Fall Manure Needs

Good manure application practices will save you time and money

Whatcom County is prized for its beauty, abundance of wildlife, and productive farmlands. This is due in large part to the watersheds that feed and support us. The health of your watershed, and its viability for future generations begins with you.

Even though it feels like summer just got here, it's time to start thinking about Fall and planning out your manure application schedule.

There are a few important parameters that will help you make better manure application decisions this Fall, including forage growth rate, soil type, rain forecast, and field conditions. By understanding these parameters you can improve nutrient utilization and yield.

Forage Growth Rate

In general, grass growth starts to decline starting in June and/or after it has headed out, soil temperatures are high (>70°F), and/or precipitation is low.

We tend to get a slight bump in growth in September after the first rains, but a steady decline is observed into the winter months, at which time grass is virtually dormant (see Figure 1 below). When grass growth begins to decline, so does the nutrient uptake, meaning you need to apply less nutrients (manure) in the late summer and

early fall in order to meet crop needs.

The manure nitrogen that you applied earlier in the season will continue to become available for up to three months after application. This means that if you stop application in August, you will likely have more than enough nutrients to last until spring.

Manure lagoons tend to be at their most concentrated in August due to a lack of rain through the summer to dilute it, so your application volume should be lower. Manure tests will let you know what your nutrient concentration is per gallon to help you apply at the appropriate rate.

Soil Type

There are three main soil types, Silt, Sand, Clay, and most soils are some combination of the three. Knowing your soil type can help you decide when and how to apply manure effectively.

For fields with sandy type soils, manure should be applied in the early

season (Jan/Feb) with application ceasing by the beginning of September to prevent loss of nitrogen below the root zone and into groundwater.

If you have fields with clay or loam soil types, you can apply manure until late October using application setbacks, after which all application activity must cease as per the County Manure Ordinance.

Pay attention to soil moisture and avoid applying to saturated soils, which will readily runoff off. If soils are compacted or prone to runoff, pay extra attention to the weather.

Weather Forecast

If your soil and manure tests indicate that manure application in the fall is appropriate, take appropriate precautions before you apply. Watching the rain forecast and the Manure Spreading Advisory will help you choose the days for manure application that are the least risky for a potential runoff event and keep your manure on your field where you want it.

Field Condition

Avoid late season, risky applications on fields with sparse vegetation (<70% density), and pay attention to what the current seasonal manure setback is. This can be found on our website under the Manure Spreading Advisory (see article on opposite page).

The setback distance predicts the potential movement of water from a field and the distance needed to filter manure applied nutrients and/or pathogens that may run into a waterbody.

Following this simple guidance can help you stay out of trouble and help keep your community water source clean. □

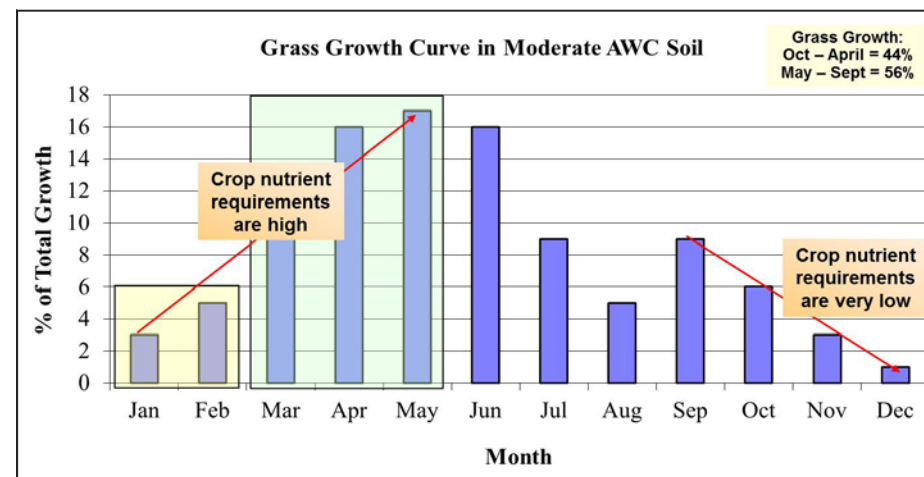


Figure 1. Grass growth curve for average soil types.

Who Provides the Best Weather Forecast??

NOAA provides a four day precipitation prediction along with temperature, wind, humidity, and other parameters that are helpful for crop production. Find the link on our webpage under “Weather”.