

Do you know that horse operations (agricultural operations) must follow waste management rules found in the British Columbia Agricultural Waste Control Regulation? Do you know that the British Columbia Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy inspects agricultural operations to determine compliance with these rules? A recent audit of agricultural operations in the Lower Mainland confirms that most people are not aware of these waste management rules, hence this article.



Here is a helpful summary of what a compliant horse operation looks like. For the detailed requirements, please refer to the Agricultural Waste Control Regulation.

Covered waste piles

Between October and April, manure or waste piles are covered for those operations/farms in areas of the province that receive more than 600 mm of precipitation during this period. If you have very wet winters or have lots of snowfall, you cover your piles to stop any runoff from the pile.

Piles in the field – here for a short time, not a long time

You store manure or waste piles in a field, but only up to a maximum of nine months.

Runoff? What runoff?

There's no contaminated runoff from any piles of manure, waste or compost or if there is, it is contained and not reaching nearby watercourses. A watercourse is any place that regularly or occasionally has surface water. Do you know that ditches, creeks, canals, lakes, marshes, ravines, and swamps are all considered watercourses? Yes, ditches are considered a watercourse.



What's the big deal about runoff? Well, runoff picks up nutrients, manure or forms leachate and runs into nearby watercourses and pollutes these watercourses. The Ministry of Agriculture's guidance document says it the best, the intent is to 'keep water out of manure and manure out of water'.

Seasonal feeding areas

These areas have berms that contain runoff and feeding locations are at least 30 meters from a watercourse. There is no accumulation of manure in these areas.

Setbacks, setbacks, setbacks

Nearby watercourses and wells are identified, and waste storage facilities or composting piles are at least 15 meters from watercourses and at least 30 meters from domestic water sources (like drinking water wells, surface water intakes or irrigation water). These setbacks also apply to the location of burial sites for mortalities.



Watercourse access

Livestock has limited access to a watercourse and no access to watercourses that are used for domestic purposes downstream. Do you know that if you have more than ten livestock in a confined area, the edge

of the area must be at least 30 meters from a watercourse? Remember our intent - to keep water out of manure and manure out of water.

Wood waste storage

Wood wastes (like sawdust, wood chips or hog fuel) are stored in piles at least 30 meters from any sources of water. There's no dust, airborne debris or contaminated runoff from the pile.

Look for more information?

You are likely familiar with the Ministry of Agriculture's extensive fact sheets and guidance. The 'Farm Practices in B.C. Reference Guide' is a great resource. For the complete legally written requirements, please search for and read the Agricultural Waste Control Regulation.