

7 Environmental Regulations Resource Kit for Nova Scotia Farmers

Various agricultural activities have the potential to pollute or damage the environment. There are a number of laws, regulations, standards, codes and guidelines that regulate agricultural activities as they interact with the environment. This legislation falls under three levels of jurisdiction: federal, provincial and municipal. It involves six federal acts, fourteen provincial acts and numerous municipal bylaws. It impacts a number of farming activities, including water use, water management, waste management, manure management, fertilizer management, livestock production, pesticide usage, wildlife usage and habitat conservation.

Discussion of these in detail is beyond the scope of this fact sheet. A more thorough discussion of this topic can be found in the Environmental Regulations Handbook for Nova Scotia Agriculture, which is available from a Regional Department of Agriculture office or online:

http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/rs/envman/env_handbk.pdf .

Farmers must be aware of these ordinances so that they can be proactive in the way they practice agriculture. Farmers can also take practical actions in managing their operations in order to reduce the risk of causing environmental damage and be in compliance with the law.

Planning to Reduce Environmental Impact

In order to be proactive, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture developed an Environmental Farm Plan Program. This program is voluntary. Its goal is to help farmers identify and assess environmental risk by examining their farm operation from an environmental management perspective. It allows farmers to incorporate environmental considerations into their business decision-making process rather than addressing environmental issues on a stop gap basis.

The program includes an initial farm visit; an on-farm environmental review by a program coordinator and an agricultural engineer; documentation of the review findings; presentation of the findings and an environmental farm plan (all aspects of the process are kept confidential); and a follow-up visit.

Included in the assessment is consideration of water use and management, farm waste management, manure storage and handling, fertilizer management and livestock production, pest management practices, pesticide storage and application practices.

For more information regarding the Environmental Farm Plan Program, contact the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture:

Phone: 893-2293; Fax: 893-7063; Email: info@nsfa-fane.ca;

Website: www.nsfa-fane.ca/efp

Although participation in this program is voluntary, it is mandatory to have an environmental farm plan to participate in some of the funding programs offered by the Department of Agriculture.

Contact: Programs & Business Risk Management

P.O. Box 550, Truro, Nova Scotia, B2N 5E3

Phone: 902-893-6510; Fax: 902-893-7579

Nutrient Management Planning

Farms that have a large number of livestock or livestock concentrated on a small land base, such as poultry or mink farms, are strongly recommended to have a nutrient management plan. Nutrient management plans are done by qualified nutrient management planners. Funding is available to offset the cost of having a nutrient management plan done. Information on how to qualify for funding is available from the Department of Agriculture, Programs & Business Risk Management. A list of certified nutrient management planners is also available from the Programs & Risk Management office.

Pesticide Regulations

Pesticides, while important in agricultural production, do pose risks to human health, especially to those applying them and to the environment. The registration, sale, use, storage and disposal of pesticides are strictly regulated under the federal *Pest Control Products Act* and the provincial *Environment Act*.

The federal *Pest Control Products Act* makes it mandatory to follow all directions and limitations shown on the label of the pest control product. The Pesticide Regulations of the *Environment Act* (NS) stipulates a similar requirement. The pesticide label is a legal document. Pesticides must be

used according to the instructions on the label. If label directions are not followed, laws are being broken.

The federal *Pest Control Products Act* and the Pesticide Regulations of the provincial *Environment Act* stipulate that only products registered in accordance with the federal *Pest Control Products Act* can be used.

Under the provincial Pesticide Regulations of the *Environment Act (NS)* a pesticide applicators certificate is required for all agricultural operators using commercial class or restricted class pest control products. However, it is possible for a certified applicator to supervise non-certified applicators.

The pesticide applicator's certificate can be obtained by completing a Pesticide Applicators course and successfully passing a written exam administered by the Nova Scotia Department of Environment. The Pesticide Applicators Certificate must be renewed every five years. This can be done by rewriting the exam or you may obtain re-certification points by attending educational sessions or courses sanctioned by the Department of Environment. You must accumulate 15 re-certification points during the five-year period before your license expires to recertify without writing an exam.

Further information regarding pesticide legislation can be found in Chapter 10 of the Environmental Regulations Handbook for Nova Scotia Agriculture.

[Written by Lorne Crozier, Resource Stewardship Division, Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, February 2010. Revised February 2011.]