

Agri-Environment Bulletin

November/December 2012

A newsletter from Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

2012 Manitoba Fall Soil Moisture Survey

A soil moisture survey will be completed across agro-Manitoba, during the last week of October first week of November. Fall soil moisture status can be helpful for agronomic decisions such as crop selection, determining potential yield and estimating fertilizer requirements. The amount of moisture within the root zone just before freeze-up indicates how much moisture is available for next year's crop. It also helps to support flood forecasting for spring. With snow cover and freezing temperatures, soil moisture remains relatively stable throughout winter. The frost acts as a seal that keeps in moisture.

The 2012 Manitoba Fall Soil Moisture Survey is an initiative of the Manitoba Ag-Weather program. The program is funded in part by *Growing Forward*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The next issue of the *Agri-Environment Bulletin* will present a summary of the results with a map of the soil moisture for the province. For more information, contact the land management specialist at marla.riekman@gov.mb.ca or visit [Manitoba Fall Soil Moisture Survey](#).



Does the Scale of Soil Survey Matter?

It should, because you need to understand the scale of the soil map you are using in order to determine the accuracy of your landscape recommendations. If you do not know this, you may be providing a regional landscape recommendation to a producer when a site specific landscape recommendation is required, or vice versa.

There are different intensities of soil survey and mapping scales and each supports different interpretations for land capability, suitability and productivity differently. The two scales of soil data in Manitoba are called reconnaissance (1:1 M and 1:126,720) and detailed (1:20,000 and 1:50,000). For more information, refer to the [Soil Management Guide](#).

Although reconnaissance soil data is available across Canada, MAFRI is dedicated to making detailed soil information available for agro-Manitoba. It supports provincial, municipal, watershed and on-farm management decisions. For example: agriculture capability, irrigation suitability, crop insurance productivity ratings.

To view soil data and interpretations, go to the federal [Agri-Map site](#). Detailed Soil Survey Reports for the Rural Municipalities of Hamiota, Roblin and DeSalaberry will be available in 2013.

New Soil Survey Reports Now Available Online

[RM of Blanshard Soil Survey Report](#)

[RM of Ritchot Soil Survey Report](#)

[RM of Killarney - Turtle Mountain Soil Survey Report](#)

[RM of Springfield Soil Survey Report](#)

What agri-environmental news is important to you?
Email dana.hill@gov.mb.ca with your ideas and suggestions for future articles.

Composting Solid Manure

More and more producers are using composting as a way to manage their manure. For example, the Duguids have a 350 head cow-calf operation in Arnes, Manitoba. They have been field storing and spreading manure on their land for many years. This year, they have changed their manure handling practice from field storing and spreading, to composting and spreading for two reasons. (1) Last year the raw manure that was spread appeared to stunt the growth of their crop. (2) The price to have someone haul raw manure to the fields was very costly.

- Composting is a controlled rotting process and has to be managed properly to get the desired benefits.
- Composting reduces the volume of manure and improves its handling characteristics.
- Composting process destroys pathogens, parasites and weed seeds.
- Composting gives soil beneficial organisms, organic matter and stable nutrients that are available all year round.

Although composting manure isn't complicated, it does require planning and management. Being new to composting, the Duguids got advice from MAFRI specialists and engineers, the Manitoba Composting Association Corporation and they became members of Compo-Stages Manitoba Services Co-op before starting to compost their manure.

The Duguids are in the early stages of composting and have already noticed that the volume of reduction of manure appears to be 50 to 60 per cent. The piles do not have an offensive odour, and flies are significantly less than other years. Once the composting process is completed, a cost comparison with composting manure and spreading to field storing and spreading will be done to determine the economic feasibility of composting manure on their farm.

For more information about composting contact MAFRI at van.doan@gov.mb.ca or visit www.manitoba.ca/agriculture.



Program Update

What we know about Growing Forward 2 (GF2)

- GF2 must be ready for program delivery as of April 1, 2013.
- Agriculture Ministers endorsed the Multilateral Framework Agreement (MFA) for *Growing Forward 2* at their September 2012 meeting in Whitehorse, Yukon.
- The MFA outlines the policies and priorities common to both levels of government and contains funding and operational principles for all of Canada.
- GF2 is a transformational approach to agricultural policy that invests in innovation and activities to improve profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of individual producers and the overall sector.
- For more information visit the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada website: [Growing Forward 2: 2013 to 2018](#).

Important Dates

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| November 10 | Ban on application of manure as well as N and P fertilizers takes effect until the following April 10. |
| November 15 | Crop residue burning restriction ends. |
| December 3 & 4 | Manitoba Conservation District Association Conference in Brandon. |

The MAFRI Agri-Environment Knowledge Centre appreciates your support of this newsletter.

Please note: the name of the newsletter has changed, but the content and source of information are still the same.