

## **Realities of Spreading Manure on Snow**

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It is recognized that spreading manure on frozen or snow-covered ground poses a greater risk to water quality during snowmelt than other times of the year. Provincial legislation manages these risks through Section 24, Manure Application Limits, Standards and Administration Regulation of the Agricultural Operation Practices Act (AOPA), which grants authority to the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB). This authority is administered through two methods. When weather conditions prevent manure spreading in a geographic area, the Board can post a notice to producers in the area that allows spreading. As well, inspectors can grant permission to individual producers. If either permission has been granted or the Board has issued a notice then the regulations state conditions that are to be followed in the application of manure on snow and frozen land.

The prohibition of application on frozen or snow-covered ground is not always an option for the industry as recognized in other jurisdictions. There are two main reasons why producers might ask for permission to spread on frozen or snow-covered land. The first is a shortage of manure storage. This can occur due to several factors including weather conditions restricting application on bare ground, availability of custom manure applicators, and emergency situations. The second is the management of snow loads in feedlot pens for animal production and health.

If a situation arises that producers and custom manure applicators need to spread manure on frozen or snow-covered ground, care and due diligence needs to be taken to minimize environmental risks.