

# **Hullcar Aquifer Inter-Ministry Working Group**

## **Update of Manure Effluent Spill at**

### **Grace-Mar Farm, Salmon River Road, Spallumcheen**

This note is to provide information and a status update of the recent spill of manure effluent at Grace-Mar Farm, followed by application of manure to their fields.

On Friday, February 17, the Qualified Professionals working for Grace-Mar Farm contacted the Ministry of Environment to advise that a spill of manure effluent had occurred the previous day on the property. Ministry Environmental Protection Officers were on site later that morning to conduct an inspection, and observed that Grace-Mar staff had begun to clean-up the spill.

On Saturday February 18, the Ministry of Environment received several notifications that Grace-Mar farm was applying manure effluent to their fields. This matter was immediately referred to the Conservation Officer Service (COS). Several community members also called the RAPP line to report manure effluent being applied. We thank them for notifying the ministry.

The COS attended the site Saturday afternoon and interviewed members of the community and farm staff, in addition to taking samples of the manure effluent being applied. This is now an open COS investigation with more details expected in the near future. In coordination with the COS investigation, a ministry Environmental Protection Officer will also be conducting a follow-up inspection. Grace-Mar Farm will continue to be monitored by ministry staff to ensure they are meeting the requirements set out in their Pollution Abatement Order. The Ministry of Environment will remain fully engaged in ensuring appropriate follow up takes place, and as we receive new information related to this incident we will be sharing that with you.

For those who may have questions about Interior Health Authority's Water Quality Advisory from July 2014, please know there are no changes and it is still in effect. As the advisory states, nitrate levels throughout the aquifer may vary; therefore it is recommended that independent well users regularly test their water (this applies to wells and surface water sources). The spill at Grace Mar Farm has no bearing on the advisory and all residents who draw water from Hullcar Aquifer should still be adhering to the following:

[www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/DrinkingWater/Documents/Hullcar\\_Area\\_WQA\\_Notific\\_Dr\\_Corneil-Jul14-2014.pdf](http://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/DrinkingWater/Documents/Hullcar_Area_WQA_Notific_Dr_Corneil-Jul14-2014.pdf)

Residents should know that there continues to be extensive coordination between several government ministries and Interior Health to ensure the water quality issue for the area is addressed. However, there is no quick fix and it is going to take multiple actions to improve water quality.

An inter-ministry working group was established last year and continues to work collaboratively to conduct studies to determine nitrate sources and better understand the hydrogeology of Hullcar

Aquifer. The ministry would also like to remind local residents of the community meeting on March 3<sup>rd</sup> where the Hullcar Aquifer inter-ministry working group will discuss findings to-date, share future actions and take questions from the public.

If you need further information from the ministry, please contact:

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Photo 1: February 17, 2017 Manure effluent spill Grace-Mar Farm



Photo 2: February 17, 2017 Pumper truck unloading spilled manure effluent into lagoon.