

Farm Practices in B.C. Reference Guide

Strengthening Farming Program



Ministry of
Agriculture
and Food

FACTSHEET

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FARM ACTIVITY: GRAIN HANDLING

Description

A large infrastructure has been developed over many years in British Columbia and in Canada to store, condition, and transport grain from farms to markets for export. Grains include cereals, oilseeds, and forage seeds. Because B.C.'s grain industry is centered in the Peace River region, much of the province's related infrastructure is in the northeast. Additional handling, transportation and storage facilities and equipment exists at, and enroute to, the ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert.

Grain destined for the export market must meet certain quality criteria. Producers employ specific management techniques to ensure these standards are met. The temperature and moisture content of each product must be kept below prescribed limits to reduce the potential for spoilage. Portable and stationary heated air dryers, grain aeration fans, and conveyors are used on farms and at central handling sites to condition and handle grain to ensure quality is not adversely affected.

If the grain contains any foreign contaminants such as weed seeds or straw, it may be taken to a seed cleaning facility where they use specialty fans and screens to separate the grain seeds from the chaff. Bulk transport trucks, trailers and railway cars are used to transport grain that meets the appropriate quality criteria to export position or to other markets.

Nuisance Concerns

The three primary disturbances mentioned in the provincial *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* are odour, noise and dust. All three are of potential concern in the grain industry.

Odour

Grain operations generally do not generate odour complaints, but objectionable odours may occur if grain at higher than recommended moisture content begins to decompose.

This can happen if a producer stores or piles grain outdoors to accommodate unexpected peaks in production output or if there are bottlenecks in the grain delivery and transportation system. Such conditions are particularly prone if grain is harvested with high moisture content or if moisture is introduced from precipitation during or after storage.

See Nuisance Reference: [Odour](#)

Noise

Grain farmers engage in various activities that require grain handling and drying equipment. Most equipment generates some noise. Noise is any sound audible and judged unwanted, irregular, or erratic. Noise levels vary and may rise when equipment is run at higher speeds. Noise may be generated continuously or intermittently, with most noise nuisances generated during seeding in Spring or harvest in Fall.

See Nuisance Reference: [Noise](#)

Dust

Dust is defined as fine-grained suspended particulate in air. The degree to which individuals perceive dust to be a nuisance will depend on the frequency, intensity, and duration of a dust-generating event.

Grain farmers engage in a variety of activities that require the use of equipment or practices that will create dust. Most grain handling operations generate some dust, particularly when transferring grain between bins, trucks, or trains for transport. Dust may also be generated as fugitive dust when fine particulates are lifted from fields, roads, buildings, and yards via air turbulence.

See Nuisance Reference: [Dust](#)

Activities and Operations

On-Farm Processing

Farmers may carry out additional processing or packaging of raw products.

See also Farm Practice: [Product Processing](#)

Machinery Operation

Farmers may clean and condition grain by drying and cooling to improve its marketability and to prevent spoilage. Screw, paddle, bucket, belt, and pneumatic conveyors are all used for grain handling. Grain handling equipment may be operated day and night.

See also Farm Practice: [Mobile Equipment](#)
[Stationary Equipment](#)

Storage

Farmers may construct temporary grain storage facilities or pile grain outdoors to accommodate unexpected peaks in production output or if there are bottlenecks in the grain delivery and transportation system. Farmers may also store fertilizers temporarily in coated hopper grain bins. These must be cleaned out prior to being used again for grain storage.

See also Farm Practice: [Storage of Farm Supplies and Products](#)

Transportation

Farmers and custom operators may haul grain to elevators, processing plants or other market delivery points during the day or night. Farmers must supply adequate vehicle turning and parking areas on the farm property to handle the volume, movement and parking of trucks and other traffic related to the activities and production of the farm.

See also Farm Practice: [Transportation](#)

Legislation

Agricultural producers are expected to follow all legislation that pertains to their farming operations. The provincial *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* stipulates that a “farm operation” must meet the *Public Health Act*, *Integrated Pest Management Act*, *Environmental Management Act* and the regulations under those Acts, as well as any land use regulation (amongst other requirements), to be protected from liability in nuisance, from being prevented from conducting that farm operation by court order, and from the application of certain local government bylaws. Local government bylaws may also apply to some farm practices, and farmers affected should contact their relevant local government for more information.

Some of the Acts, regulations, and bylaws that may be relevant to this topic may include the following:

Federal Legislation

The *Feeds Act* regulates the manufacture, sale, import, export, packaging and labelling of animal “feeds”.

The *Fisheries Act* protects fish and fish habitat in ditches, streams, rivers and wetlands and prohibits the discharge of deleterious substances such as fertilizers, manure and pesticides into watercourses frequented by fish, or that may end up in water frequented by fish. It also prohibits the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of “fish habitat”.

The *Safe Food for Canadians Act* regulates “food commodities”, including their inspection, labelling, advertising, and safety, and their import, export and interprovincial trade. It provides the establishment of standards for food commodities, the registration and licensing of persons who perform certain activities related to them, and registration of and standards for establishments where those activities are performed.

The *Seeds Act* regulates the testing, inspection, quality, import, export, labelling and sale of “seeds”.

The *Species at Risk Act* prohibits killing, harming, harassing, capturing, taking, buying, selling, trading or collecting listed species, and prohibits the destruction of or damage to the “residence” of listed species. It also prohibits the destruction of the “critical habitat” of listed species on certain federal lands, where that habitat is protected by a federal protection order.

Provincial Legislation

The *Commercial Transport Act* regulates the registration, licensing, and operation of all commercial vehicles.

The *Motor Vehicle Act* and Motor Vehicle Act Regulation protect people traveling on public roads, in part by regulating hazards – including the operation and movement of farm equipment, implements, vehicles, and animals on public roads. The Act requires that loads must be securely fastened and/or sealed to prevent loss during shipment.

The *Passenger Transportation Act* requires the registration of motor carrier operators for hire and outlines licensing and commercial vehicle safety requirements for the transportation of passengers between residences and places of employment. “Car pool vehicles” (a driver and up to 11 passengers) and “passenger transportation pool vehicles” are exempt from the Act and regulation.

Publications

Publications that provide more information on grain handling include the following:

[*Heated Air Grain Dryers*](#)

[*Reducing Energy Use in Grain Dryers*](#)