

## FARM PRACTICE

## FARM MAINTENANCE

### Description

The majority of British Columbia farms are occupied and well cared for. Occasionally, a farmstead or field may be abandoned or not be properly maintained. Agricultural land that has been neglected for one or more consecutive years by the owner or lessee may create problems for neighbours. The most common problems are related to the increase in uncontrolled populations of pests, including insects, weeds, plants, diseases, and rodents. These pests may move toward neighbouring farms and non-farm properties. Owners of these properties must then incur additional expenses to protect their land, plants or animals. Neglected farms may also produce crops or weeds that lure wildlife into areas that may in turn become unsafe for the human population.

### Activities and Operations

#### Pests

Various practices may be employed to prevent or minimize pests and other problems on both abandoned and neighboring farms and non-farm properties. Some practices focus on controlling the pest or its hosts. Other practices alter the habitat to discourage pests. Unless pests are to be controlled separately through specific pest management practices, abandoned host plants should be destroyed and replaced by plants that will not harbour the species of pests causing a problem. Rodents and insects should also be controlled.

See also Farm Practice: Pest Management

#### Erosion

Watercourses should be incorporated with appropriate riparian vegetation to prevent streambank erosion. Fields should also be cover cropped to prevent wind or water erosion.

#### Safety

Neglected buildings or derelict structures may be unsafe. Uninhabited houses and unused buildings should therefore be demolished or sealed against entry.

#### Dumping

Abandoned farms should not become dumping grounds for undesirable materials such as broken concrete slabs, used asphalt, demolition waste, old cars, and the like.

## Related Farm Practices

Other farm practices that pertain to farmstead maintenance include, but are not limited to, the following.

### **Burning**

Brush, weeds, crop residue, prunings, and the like may be disposed of through burning.

See also Farm Practice: [Burning](#)

### **Crop Residue Management**

Harvested, pruned or processed vegetable crops may result in crop residue.

See also Farm Practice: [Crop Residue Management](#)

### **Drainage**

Surface water ponding and runoff issues need to be managed. Overgrown or plugged ditches and drainage outlets need to be maintained, especially if drainage channels are outlets for other properties.

See also Farm Practice: [Drainage](#)

### **Farmstead Refuse**

Not all on-farm solid wastes are agricultural organic wastes. Examples include plastic, glass, metal, wood, paper, cardboard and other media. Care must be taken to ensure proper handling and disposal.

See also Farm Practice: [Farmstead Refuse](#)

### **Pesticides**

Because pesticides pose a potential for environmental harm, governments regulate their use.

See also Farm Practice: [Pesticides](#)

### **Pest Management**

Pest problems may arise from unmanaged crops, manure and feed.

See also Farm Practice: [Pest Management](#)

### **Weed Control**

Weed control is a necessary part of farmstead maintenance to ensure suppression, prevention and eradication. Cultivated or disturbed areas should be planted into grass or other plants to mitigate the establishment of potential weeds.

See also Farm Practice: [Weed Control](#)

### **Wildlife Damage Control**

Wildlife encroachment as a result of unmaintained farms can disrupt and damage neighbouring crops and land.

See also Farm Practices: [Interior BC Wildlife Damage Control](#)  
[South Coastal BC Wildlife Damage Control](#)

## Legislation

Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C. Acts, regulations and bylaws that regulate or may affect farmstead maintenance practices include, but are not limited to, the following.

### Provincial Legislation

The *Integrated Pest Management Act* outlines practices and measures to prevent the spread of pests which are destructive to plants.

The *Weed Control Act* places responsibility for the control of noxious weeds on the occupant of a given farm or property.

### Local Government Legislation

Local government bylaws may be in place to address unsightly premises, the control of weeds and pests, and the timing of open burning.

## Publications

Publications that provide further information on farmstead maintenance include, but are not limited to, the following. Refer to Appendix D for details. In addition, production guides for various commodities may also be helpful in providing guidelines for farmstead maintenance.

*British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Reference Guide*

*British Columbia Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Guide*

*On-Farm Food Safety*

*Siting and Management of Dairy Barns and Operations*

*Siting and Management of Poultry Barns*