



Laurel WID Board

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Dear Fellow Farmers:

This spring we noted how, despite some outstanding overall improvements in water quality, some issues do remain in the fall. We are asking you to make sure you take care as you apply manure this fall, and as you manage pastures. With help from some of our partners, such as the Whatcom Conservation District and Washington State Department of Agriculture, here are a few helpful tips to remember:

- Make sure to use adequate buffers. The application setback in September is 40 feet and October 80 feet from all waterways. Remember buffers apply to swales that have direct access to waterways, too.
- Pay attention to areas where compaction from equipment has occurred close to buffers.
- Be careful where flushing of underground lines occurs. Check the valves and risers for leaks.
- Get manure out early. Don't gamble with the weather. Be sure your lagoon is empty in early October when fields and weather are low risk
- Keep an eye on weather reports. Your soil will take up a lot of water this time of year, but the first big rain event on dry soil, and any event over 0.5 inches in 24 hours, can cause a runoff event so if you see a heavy rain event coming, hold off on applications. Once soils are wet, watch the weather to ensure you don't have a saturation runoff event. Sign up for text alerts to get notices of significant weather events and manure application tips. Text "EZManure" to 797979.
- Make sure to not overapply. Grass doesn't need much nutrients going into the winter months, and applications that are more than what the soil can handle are one of the biggest causes of runoff events
- If a corn or potato field qualifies for having manure applications due to its soil test, don't apply solid manure to bare ground without incorporating it. Also avoid compacted areas.
- Take a look around your facilities for any issues that could lead to excess water causing issues. Are the gutters and rainspouts in working order? A broken gutter on a 10,000 square foot roof or surface can add almost 200,000 gallons of clean water to your winter storage.
- For animals on pasture, restrict them to areas that will not become saturated, and observe buffers. Remove animals from wet pastures before they compact the surface. Harrow the final pasture area when animals are removed later in October
- Be sure to get your cover crop planted as soon as corn and potatoes are harvested. Consider planting a relay crop next spring instead. In-row cover for row crops such as berries is also a great practice.

The Laurel Watershed Improvement District Board is proud of the work our landowners have done so far in keeping our waters clean. By taking a few extra steps we can make things even better for us and our neighbors, cutting down even further on the fecal coliform sources in our waterways.

In your service,

Laurel Watershed Improvement Board