

# Guidelines for Spreading Manure in winter



Winter application of manure is the least desirable, from both a nutrient utilization and a pollution point of view. The major problem is that frozen soil offers a relatively impervious surface that prevents rain and melting snow from carrying nutrients into the soil. The result is nutrient loss and pollution through runoff. All manure applications in the winter should be made as far away from environmentally sensitive areas as possible.

Pennsylvania regulations define winter as any of the following:

1. December 15 – February 28
2. Frozen ground (depth of 4 inches)
3. Snow covered ground

*\* All farms that generate or spread manure are required to have a manure management plan*

## Winter Restrictions

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- **Maintain a setback of 100 feet** from streams, ponds, lakes, public/private drinking water sources, open sinkhole, and above ground inlet to an agricultural drainage system.
- **Maximum application rates** of 5,000 gallons/acre, 20 tons/acre of non-poultry manure, or 3 tons/acre of poultry manure.
- **All fields must have at least 25% crop residue, or an established and growing cover crop.** This generally excludes corn silage or tobacco fields without a cover crop. Alfalfa, grass hay, or pasture fields are acceptable.
- **Do not spread on slopes greater than 15%.** Soil type slopes of A, B, or C are acceptable.
- **Do not spread within the channel of a non-vegetated concentrated water flow area** such as a swale, gully, or ditch.



If it is necessary to spread manure on frozen ground, only spread enough to provide the needed space in the storage. Wait until Spring to completely empty the storage.

These restrictions may not, by themselves, prevent surface water and groundwater pollution. All farms are subject to the PA Clean Streams Law. Good judgement must be used in planning and implementing a manure management plan.

