



Notes from the Dairy Nutrient Management Program

Washington State Department of Agriculture

2010 Lagoon Assessments

Inspectors looked at a total of 294 lagoons at 155 facilities in 13 counties this year with mostly very good results.

At a total of 44% of all facilities, no problems were identified. This is down from nearly 70% in 2009.

A wet, late summer prevented many facilities from making all their land applications by the time of the assessment. Consequently, a higher percentage of lagoons were noted as needing to be pumped down – 37% in 2010, compared to 14% in 2009.

Solids management was a problem in only 2% of cases.

The condition of dikes was of concern in 19% on assessments. Out of 155 facilities, only one had serious enough problems to require a follow-up site inspection.

This year lagoon inspections were concentrated in the corridor from the Canadian border south to the Samish and Stillaquamish river watersheds in Snohomish county. Thank you for your preparations!



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Burrows and tunnels are revealed

Winter is time to inspect lagoons for burrowing pests



A rare sighting of Townsend's Mole. Moles can dig surface tunnels at rates of nearly 18 feet in an hour. Later, they can travel through those tunnels at speeds reaching near 80 feet per minute.

West of the mountains, winter is a good time for inspecting lagoon berms for signs of mole activity. East of the mountains, now is the time to inspect for Northern Pocket Gophers and Marmots. Their persistent digging is most pronounced in fall and winter when the soil is moist and easy to work. Also, vegetation is dormant this time of year and evidence of tunnels is more easily seen.

The Pacific Northwest is home to three species of moles, but only two of them, the Coast and Townsend's Moles are considered potential pests.

Townsend's Mole

The largest of the seven North American species, it uses its considerable bulk to great advantage when tunneling, and is regarded as the most damaging of the western mole species.

Coast Mole

Also known as the Pacific Mole, it is outwardly quite similar in appearance to the Townsend's Mole but is smaller in size. This species seems to favor better-drained soils and trends toward deeper tunneling. Individual Coast Moles have been known to construct several hundred mounds during the course of a single winter.

*(See **Burrowing animals** on page 2)*



Did you know...

The image above was created in the rural town of **Inakadate, Japan** using four different varieties of rice. Each year in late May, hundreds of volunteers and villagers plant and grow elaborate designs across vast paddies. The effort is part of it's economic revitalization program to attract visitors.

Read more:

<http://dailymail.co.uk/news/worldnews/article-1198381/Bizarre-spectacle-giant-crop-murals-covering-rice-fields-Japan.html#ixzz19LE3mDXL>

A typical pocket gopher, weighing on average 4 to 6 ounces, can move approximately a ton of soil to the surface each year.



Burrowing animals can pose risk to lagoon dikes

(Continued from page 1)

Pocket Gophers

Pocket gophers are medium-sized burrowing rodents often mistaken for moles. Gophers prefer the drier climate of eastern Washington, and a few places in the southwestern region of the state. Pocket gophers leave soil mounds that are distinctly different from moles. While mole hills appear round when viewed from above, gopher mounds are heart or fan-shaped and tunnel entrances are plugged to keep various intruders out.

A typical pocket gopher can move approximately a ton of soil to the surface each year. This enormous feat has many benefits for the soil itself but for earthen banks and berms, this “deep tillage” is destructive. Gopher tunnels in ditch banks and earthen dams can weaken these structures, causing water loss by seepage or the complete wash-out of a bank. The presence of gophers also increases the likelihood of badger and coyote activity, which can also cause considerable damage.

Population tactics

A naturalistic approach to reducing animal populations is to encourage certain species — such as snakes, long-tailed weasels, skunks, hawks and barn owls, who consider them tasty. Predators alone will not eliminate a nuisance

population, but when combined with other techniques can contribute to overall management.

Rodents favor spaces under the roots of shrubs and trees for their tunnel entrances and exits. For this reason, woody shrubs and blackberry bushes should not be allowed to become established around your lagoon.

Lethal control

Burrowing animals can be controlled any time, but it is best to concentrate efforts in late winter and early spring, before they give birth. Individuals may trap or kill moles on their own property (RCW 77.36.030). However, with the passage of Initiative 713 in 2001, traditional “body-gripping” traps are no longer legal for use in Washington (RCW 77.15.192, 77.15.194). Pocket gophers may be trapped or killed in all areas of the state except those noted below. No special trapping permit is needed if live traps are used (WAC 232-12-142).

Relocating trapped gophers is not advised as it is unlawful to release a pocket gopher anywhere within the state, other than on the property where it was legally trapped. (RCW 77.15.250; WAC 232-12-271).

Important note

The Mazama (Western) pocket gopher of Thurston, Pierce, Clark, and Mason Counties has been designated a **state threatened and federal candidate species**. Only remnant populations of this animal exist. **Lethal control should not be used in these areas.**

Adapted from "**Living with Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest**" (see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/book>):

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The Mensonides sit down to review nutrient application records with inspector Dan McCarty and his computer.



Tim Thomasson of Thomasson Dairy looks on as his manure management practices are recorded electronically for the first time by inspector Cara McKinnon.



Louis Bouma concludes another favorable inspection, using inspector Steve Hulbert's netbook computer to provide his signature.

Computers streamline DNMP inspection process

DNMP recently made a significant change to its inspection program when inspectors began recording their results using computers, right on-site. Now, with the additional use of mobile printers and wireless modems (also new to the program) inspectors can print and sign

inspection reports before leaving your property.

The new electronic process will streamline data entry and decrease the amount of time needed to process regulatory paperwork. Nothing needs to be mailed, so postage fees are saved as well.

This new efficiency is not without a few challenges which we will continue to address in the months ahead. In the meantime, we thank those patient operators who worked with us through the initial implementation period. Your patience is much appreciated.

Suspension puts recordkeeping rulemaking on hold for now

The formal process developing recordkeeping requirements for manure management has now entered a holding period. November 17th, 2010, an Executive Order from the Governor suspended non-critical rule development and adoption until December 31, 2011. The Governor cited the economy as the reason for her action.

Technical discussions will proceed later this spring with the public review process going forward later in the year.

In 2009, legislation amended the dairy nutrient management act to require that dairies maintain all

records necessary to show agronomic applications to lands covered by their nutrient management plan. In 2010, the legislature established a penalty of up to \$5,000 for failing to document those applications.

The rulemaking process will be used to define the records necessary to document agronomic applications and the factors to be considered when determining penalty amounts.

Upcoming changes in the NRCS 590 practice standard for nutrient management, will likely increase the emphasis on managing for phosphorus.

To review materials connected with the proposed new rules, visit the WSDA web site at <http://agr.wa.gov/LawsRules/Rulemaking/FSCS/dnmp penalties.aspx>.

For more information about this rulemaking, contact Ginny Prest, (360) 902-1928 or vprest@agr.wa.gov

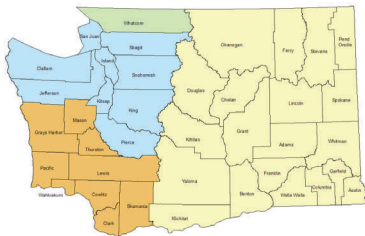


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The six standards currently out for public comment.

- **Standard 360** - Waste Storage Impoundment (Decommissioning)
- **Standard 388** - Irrigation Field Ditch
- **Standard 396** - Aquatic Organism Passage
- **Standard 400** - Bivalve Aquaculture Waste Control
- **Standard 589** - Cross Wind Trap Strips
- **Standard 590** - Nutrient Management

Deadline for weighing in on the proposals is February 25th.

It's been five years

NRCS Nutrient Management Standard 590 Under Review

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is nearing completion of an update to Standard 590— Nutrient Management. There are a number of changes proposed. One of them will put more specific emphasis on managing phosphorus levels.

In response to new science, the NRCS revisits each of their practice standards every five years. After national adoption, states have one year to add applicable changes to their local resources and information.

WSDA has submitted comments regarding 590 at the national level and will actively monitor changes at the state level. We plan to use the broad-based technical discussions for our rule making activities (see elsewhere in this issue) to provide information and informed discussion on the proposed changes, including phosphorus management.

View the six standards at:

<ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/NHQ/practice-standards/federal-register/>