



news release

For release: November 26, 2002

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EVES GOVERNMENT MOVES FORWARD WITH NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS

TORONTO - As part of the Ernie Eves government's pledge to ensure clean, safe drinking water throughout Ontario, public consultation meetings on a second round of regulations under the *Nutrient Management Act* are being launched today. The legislation and its regulations will provide clear, consistent standards for agricultural practices that impact upon the environment, especially as they relate to land-applied materials containing nutrients.

Minister of Agriculture and Food, Helen Johns and Minister of the Environment, Chris Stockwell recently completed the first of at least three stages of consultations. The first stage dealt with content requirements of nutrient management plans, and the categories of livestock operations that will be required to prepare these plans.

"The comments we received in the first stage from farmers, environmentalists, municipalities and others were instrumental in making key improvements to the regulations," Johns said. "I'm looking forward to additional thoughtful input in the second stage. These regulations will go a long way towards protecting the environment and ensuring a competitive agri-food sector in Ontario."

"Our government is committed to ensuring that Ontario has, and enforces, the best clean water policies in the world," said Stockwell. "We are committed to implementing all of Commissioner O'Connor's recommendations. The government's nutrient management framework will form part of the water protection approach envisioned by Commissioner O'Connor. We thank all those who participated in consultations in stage one and encourage everyone to join us for consultations on stage two regulations."

The second stage consultations will deal with requirements regarding:

- categories of non-livestock, municipal and industrial generators of materials containing nutrients;
- content requirements of nutrient management strategies for municipal and industrial generators;
- construction and siting of barns and manure storages;
- setbacks and buffers from watercourses for land application;
- training and certification for anyone who prepares nutrient management plans and strategies, as well as haulers and applicators;
- quality standards for land-applied nutrients;
- nutrient management at feedlot operations;
- roles and responsibilities of local advisory committees;
- winter spreading;
- land application near municipal wells; and
- enhancements to the Ministry of the Environment's land application program.

A proposed strategy to ban the land application of untreated septage over a five-year period will also be part of the second stage consultations.

During the first stage of consultations, approximately 580 people attended public meetings held in

Caledonia, Wallaceburg, Clinton, Kemptville and North Bay. More than 80 written submissions were also received.

The second stage will see a series of meetings in locations across the province during December and January, and several will be hosted by Minister Johns, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture and Food Toby Barrett and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of the Environment Bill Murdoch. The series of meetings will begin December 11, 2002 in Mississauga, with three further meetings the following week in Gananoque, Grimsby and Trenton. Details of future meetings will be available soon.

Each of the stages of consultations involves the posting of draft regulations on the Environmental Bill of Rights information registry (http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/er/registry.htm), as well as the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's and Ministry of the Environment's Web sites (www.gov.on.ca/omaf and www.ene.gov.on.ca). The postings for stage two, as well as the times and locations of the consultation meetings will be on the two ministries' Web sites in the near future.

For more information go to www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/agops/index.html.

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BACKGROUND

CONSULTATIONS ON DRAFT REGULATIONS UNDER *NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT ACT*

Context

The Nutrient Management Act received Royal Assent on June 27, 2002. As part of the Ontario government's Clean Water Strategy, the Act provides for province-wide standards to address the effects of agricultural practices on the environment, especially as they relate to land-applied materials containing nutrients.

The act addresses the issues and risks identified in the Environmental Commissioner's special report of July 2000, "The Protection of Ontario's Groundwater and Intensive Farming." It aligns with Commissioner Dennis O'Connor's Report of the Walkerton Inquiry Part Two and builds on the government's Smart Growth Strategy, which calls for well-planned and environmentally sensitive development.

The legislation represents a comprehensive, clear, province-wide approach that protects water, the environment and the well-being of communities in rural Ontario, while ensuring farmers can invest in and operate their farms with confidence. The need for this approach was confirmed by farmers, municipalities, environmental groups and others during consultations held by the Task Force on Intensive Agricultural Operations in Rural Ontario during early 2000.

The government has pledged to move quickly to develop and implement regulations under the *Nutrient Management Act*.

Developing regulations

The government will use the O'Connor report and the results of further stakeholder consultations to develop regulations that incorporate standards and best practices to ensure both the best possible protection for the environment and the continued economic viability of farming in Ontario.

Consultations are being held in at least three stages, with each stage involving the posting of draft regulations on the Environmental Bill of Rights information registry (http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/er/registry.htm), as well as the Ministry of Agriculture and

Food's and Ministry of the Environment's Web sites (www.ene.gov.on.ca and www.gov.on.ca/omaf). The posting for draft regulations under stage two consultations will be posted in the near future.

These postings will be followed by public consultation meetings:

Stage one consultations concluded in October, 2002, and included a draft regulation covering: the content of nutrient management plans (NMPs); the categories of agricultural operations that would be required to prepare these NMPs, and when they would be required to have them. Approximately 580 people attended public meetings held in Caledonia, Wallaceburg, Clinton, Kemptville and North Bay. More than 80 written submissions have also been received. This information has been used to improve the stage one draft regulations and these will be included in the stage two consultations.

Stage two consultations will also include other draft regulations regarding:

- categories of non-livestock, municipal and industrial generators of materials containing nutrients;
- content requirements of nutrient management strategies for municipal and industrial generators;
- construction and siting of barns and manure storages;
- setbacks and buffers from watercourses for land application;
- training and certification for anyone who prepares nutrient management plans and strategies, as well as haulers and applicators;
- quality standards for land-applied nutrients;
- nutrient management at feedlot operations;
- roles and responsibilities of local advisory committees;
- winter spreading;
- land application near municipal wells; and,
- enhancements to the Ministry of the Environment's land application program.

A proposed strategy to ban the land application of untreated septage over a five-year period will also be part of the second stage consultations.

The second stage will see a series of meetings in locations across the province during December and January, and several will be hosted by Minister Johns, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture and Food Toby Barrett and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of the Environment Bill Murdoch. The series of meetings will begin December 11, 2002 in Mississauga, with three further meetings the following week in Gananoque, Grimsby and Trenton. Details of future meetings will be available soon.

The regulations from stages one and two are expected to be in force in the spring of 2003.

Stage three consultations will include regulations dealing with livestock access to waterways; manure haulage and transfer; and on-farm waste water and dead animal disposal.

As continuous improvements are made in nutrient management, with advances in technology and best practices, more regulations may be drafted and consultations held.

For more information go to www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/agops/index.html.

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Last Updated: May 23, 2003