



Dear Rochelle

Dear Rochelle,

I am a mixed vegetable producer who covers crops (fall rye / winter peas) annually, and sticks to a solid 3-4 year rotation. I was just reading the National Standard and I am concerned as I do not have an on-farm source of manure, I do not have any organic neighbours with animals, and I do not understand what type of manure I need to use to maintain my organic status under the National Regime.

I have a pile of aged manure from the layer operation up the road, plus some dairy slurry from my neighbour, that I want to spread first thing in the spring once I work the field, but not sure I can. Can you help me?

Nervous in Rutland

Dear Nervous,

Many organic producers have the same concern! For 2008 I suggest you continue using your current manure sources as the National Standards implementation date is December 14, 2008 and there are a few clarifications on this topic still to be worked out. Right now my understanding is, once the Standard is implemented everyone will need to be sure that a good portion of their soil fertility (see CGSB para 5.4.5) is being generated by cover crops, crop residues, animal manures and followed only then by augmentation with permitted commercial nutrient products. Based on the scenario you painted I think you will be compliant with this requirement, while others may need to plant more cover crops, use more legumes in their cover crop, or lengthen their cover crop season plus use more animal manure and compost.

Another consideration is CGSB para 5.5.1, which requires that all organic animal manure generated on farm be used before using off-farm sources; I don't think this one is too hard to work with, but then what type of off-farm manure is allowed? My interpretation of what type of off-

farm manure source can be used (see CGSB para 5.5.1(a)) is one where the source farm allows all animals' sufficient space to fully lie down, stand up and stretch; and the owner is able to spread at least some of the manure generated on their own property.

Note, that BC has officially requested that 5.5.1(a) be revised; eliminating the requirement for the source farm to spread a portion of its manure on its own land. In the same submission BC supplied clarifying language in an attempt to help identify which types of non-organic livestock operations are acceptable. Hopefully this item will get dealt with during the next round of CGSB discussions scheduled for April 2008.

Rochelle