

For those concerned about the regulatory aspect of fall fertilization, consider the following taken from http://www.manitoba.ca/sd/water/lakes-beaches-rivers/nutrient_management/index.html

Restriction on Winter Application of Nutrients

Provincial legislation prohibits the application of nitrogen and phosphorus between and including November 10th of one year and April 10th of the following year. Nutrient sources containing nitrogen and/or phosphorus include synthetic fertilizer and livestock manure. The winter spreading restrictions are in place as the application of nutrients onto frozen or snow-covered soils results in an increased risk of nutrient runoff. Nutrient runoff to waterways contributes directly to algal blooms in Lake Winnipeg and elsewhere.

However, there may be some years where weather conditions are such that agricultural land can reasonably be worked to apply nutrients between November 10th of one year and April 10th of the following year for crop uptake while still protecting water quality. In these cases, a provincial or regional variance may be issued.

Provincial/Regional Variances

Provincial legislation (Nutrient Management Regulation (M.R. 62/2008) and the Livestock Manure and Mortalities Management Regulation (M.R. 42/98)) authorizes the director to vary these dates if conditions are such that soils remain thawed and are not snow covered on or after November 10th providing nutrients can reasonably be worked into the soil for crop uptake or if soils thaw earlier than April 10th in the spring.

The following two policies are currently in effect:

- Application in spring prior and including April 10th
- Application in autumn on or after November 10th

Individual Variances

When a regional/province-wide variance has not been issued for the winter application of nutrients and an individual producer believes their soil/weather conditions should be considered for a variance, agricultural producers must contact staff in the Nutrient Management Regulation program at nmr@gov.mb.ca or by phone at (204) 945-0002. If an individual wishes to make a formal request for a variance, the request must be provided in writing by a Professional Agrologist or Certified Crop Adviser.

Manitoba Government has committed to convening a discussion on soil/weather conditions encountered throughout Manitoba prior to November 10th of each year. Among the stakeholders who contribute to this discussion are the Canadian Association of Agri-Retailers (CAAR) and Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP). If fertilizer dealers or farmers have comments to put forward, they should do so by contacting their respective representative.