

An aerial photograph of a rural farmstead. The foreground is dominated by large, brown, tilled fields. A dense line of green trees runs diagonally across the middle ground. In the background, there are more fields, some green and some brown, along with a road and several farm buildings, including a large white barn and a red barn. The sky is not visible.

# ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE ACTION

Agriculture Environment Unit

2021

# What is the Agriculture Environment Unit?

- ▣ AEU is a team within The Department of Environment, Water and Climate Change focusing on legislative compliance within the Agriculture sector.
  - Clients are mainly within the Agriculture community, but also include pesticide vendors and applicators in sectors like:
    - Landscape (cosmetic pesticides)
    - Biting fly



# Agriculture Environment Unit Staff.....

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# Why was it established?

- ▣ A strained relationship between Government and the Agriculture sector forced a new look on how we (Gov) do business.
- ▣ A pilot project was put forward in 2015 within Justice and Public Safety (PEI Conservation Officers)
  - Plain clothed officer focused on handling Agriculture complaints, while taking a proactive, risk based approach.
- ▣ Building on the success of the project, the Agriculture Environment Unit was permanently established within the Dept. of Communities, Land and Environment in 2016.

# What is a Risk Based Approach?

- Establishing priorities based on risk to the environment, public health and safety
  - Education and compliance coaching for lower risk incidents of non-compliance
    - Eg. Planting a crop within a buffer zone
    - Eg. Soil Erosion
  - Enforcement (Fines and Orders) for high risk activities or when efforts to achieve compliance have failed
    - Eg. Spraying pesticides in winds greater than 20Km/h
    - Eg. Burning garbage or demolition/construction waste

# What is our Role?

- ▣ Responding and Investigating Agriculture related complaints linked to:
  - *Environmental Protection Act* ( *Environment Officers*)
  - *Pesticide Control Act* ( *Inspectors*)
  - *Agriculture Crop Rotation Act* ( *Inspectors*)
- ▣ **Inspections**
- ▣ **Compliance education**
- ▣ **Information**
- ▣ **Enforcement**
  - NOTE - The AEU is not the lead agency in the event of a fish kill. That is the responsibility of Justice and Public Safety. The AEU works with growers after the investigation is complete/ compliance coaching

# How it Works: Complaint

Gather information from caller, talk to grower, visit farm

Is there a compliance issue?

NO

YES

- re-contact and educate the caller

**Note:** In some cases, a risk may be present even though the grower is in compliance. In this case, we suggest the grower seek technical advise / guidance and suggest some contacts within government.

Example: Soil Erosion

- evaluate risk / likelihood of gaining compliance
- Choose appropriate response - compliance coaching to enforcement
- re-contact caller to inform/educate
- follow-up to ensure compliance achieved

# How it Works: Inspection

- ▣ **scheduled or random**  
(e.g. observe applicator in field)
- ▣ **topic specific, not comprehensive**  
(e.g. ask to see records, pesticide storage facility)
- ▣ **if non-compliance is found,**
  - Evaluate situation on environmental risk or risk to human health or safety  
(choose appropriate response)
  - Educate, show what is needed to have compliance
  - Follow-up to ensure compliance achieved



# How it Works: Information

- ▣ can be initiated by
  - Ag-Environment Officer (introductions, provide contact info, log books)
  - grower (over the phone or ask for a farm visit)
  - general public
- ▣ some information has been provided presentations and meetings

# Non-Compliance Decision Matrix

		<b>RISK</b> (ENVIRONMENTAL, HUMAN HEATH or SAFETY)		
		LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
<b>LIKELIHOOD OF COMPLIANCE</b>  (COMPLIANCE HISTORY / WILLINGNESS / CAPACITY TO COMPLY)	HIGH	ADVISORY	ADVISORY, WARNING, or ORDER	WARNING, ORDER, or CHARGES
	MODERATE	ADVISORY or WARNING	WARNING or ORDER	CHARGES
	LOW	WARNING, ORDER, or CHARGES	CHARGES	CHARGES

# What type of Calls have we been getting? (The Numbers)

- ▣ 350 calls in 2020
  - 250 Complaints
  - 75 Inspections
    - 17 Charges
    - 14 Warnings
    - 0 Orders



# Top calls for 2019

Subject		Complaints	Inspections	Totals
WATERCOURSE	BUFFER ZONE	55	10	14
ENVIRONMENT	DUMPING	38		
AGRICULTURE	WIND SPEED / DRIFT	29		4
PESTICIDE	APPLICATION	11	4	9
PESTICIDE	LICENSING			19
ENVIRONMENT	LITTER	18		1
ENVIRONMENT	BURNING	12		4
AGRICULTURE	MANURE	13		
WATERCOURSE	HEADLANDS	2	2	7
AGRICULTURE	SOIL EROSION	9		1



# Complaints



Buffer Zone  
1/3 were in  
compliance





# Complaints



Soil Erosion





# Complaints



Pesticides

Wind Speed

Storage/Records



- ▣ Other Examples of Calls
  - - Planted Headlands
  - - Slope fields
  - - Crop Rotation





# Going Forward

- ▣ Spring/Summer 2021
  - Re-inspection of complaints from 2020
  - Responding to complaints
  - Pesticide Records and Pesticide Storage Inspections
  - Farm Visits

# Questions?

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