

Accepting Soil onto Agricultural Land



This fact sheet outlines risks associated with accepting soil onto agricultural lands, how to mitigate those risks

RISK



Crop Disease

Regulated under the Agricultural Pests Act for its ability to have devastating effects on cruciferous crops like canola, clubroot has been discovered in Wheatland County and three neighboring municipalities. but increased movement of soil into our municipality greatly increases the risk of further spread.

RISK



Weeds

The potential movement of weed infestations into or throughout the County through bulk soil transfer is a cause for concern. Weeds cause economic and biodiversity losses, affecting our agricultural community. Depending on the type of weed and severity of an infestation when found, weeds can be very difficult to eradicate.

RISK



Soil Quality

The quality of soil offered by companies looking to haul to agricultural lands will not always meet a standard expected by the farmer. Soil quality issues associated with this type of soil transfer include low organic matter content, high clay content, salinity, rocks, and garbage.

RISK



Drainage

Where the objective of placing bulk soil is to improve drainage or reduce standing water, landowners must be aware of potential impacts to neighbours and rules. Displaced water can flood or damage other properties, and landowners may be reported for potentially unauthorized activities leading to regulatory problems for the landowner.

Producers must be vigilant when accepting any bulk soil onto agricultural lands to ensure that productivity is not impacted and weeds and pests are not introduced. We must work together to ensure that the high quality agricultural land base in Wheatland County is maintained.

Suggestions for protecting **agricultural land and landowners** from risky bulk soil decisions



Scrutinize the Source

Find out where soil will be coming from. Are there causes for concern based on the previous use of the land? Has the soil been brought to a site from another site already? Knowing exactly where soil is coming from is the first step in understanding whether it is right for your land. The Alberta Soil Information Viewer can provide information about soil characteristics for most locations. It is recommended that you visit the source site to see what you're being offered before agreeing to accept the material.



Confirm Quality

After gaining an understanding of the source of the material you're being offered, request soil testing proportionate to soil transfer volume. What are the organic matter, sand, silt, and clay contents of the soil? When the soil was stripped, were topsoil and subsoil kept separate or have they been mixed? Is there salinity or sodicity present that will make crop growth difficult? Do not assume you will be given clean topsoil; it is better to understand the quality problems present before soil is left for you to manage.



Guarantee Pest-Free

Ensure soil is free of clubroot and other agricultural pests and diseases by requiring testing for soil-borne diseases. Not only will your future crop production benefit, but diligence in preventing the spread of clubroot is required under the *Agricultural Pests Act*. You can also ask to have soil tested for presence of regulated weeds seeds.



Insist on an Agreement

Get your expectations assured in writing through use of a contract or other agreement. How much soil are you acquiring? Is the delivery equipment clean, what is its quality, clubroot, and weed status? Whose responsibility is it to remove rocks and garbage that are left on your property? If quality, productivity, disease, or weed issues arise after soil has been placed, who is responsible for correcting them? Who is responsible for dust and other impacts during soil hauling? Who is responsible for obtaining any necessary authorizations for the work?

Read the Regulations

The placement of soil in areas where water flows or is present is regulated under Alberta's *Water Act*. A landowner will be personally liable for any changes to drainage that result in damage to infrastructure or other properties, or for any reported activities that become a compliance matter for Alberta Environment and Parks. Protect yourself by knowing and understanding the rules before deciding where to place soil. Be sure to check with the County regarding road use and development permit requirements.

Watch for Weeds

After soil has been placed, watch for growth of any weed species. Weeds are much easier to manage when infestations are caught early, landowners are legally responsible for managing or controlling regulated weeds on their land. Enlist the assistance of your County Agriculture and Environment team to identify weeds and control measures if needed.

For more information contact the
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