

# *Silvertip Pipeline Incident*

## **Recommendations on Management of Potentially Impacted Agricultural Lands**

July 29, 2011

Because the Yellowstone River has dropped below pre-spill condition, oil residue is visible in many areas, including some agricultural lands. This sheet contains information collected from Agency and Academic subject matter experts. It contains general guidelines for crops and livestock. As always, if you suspect an unusual problem, please consult with your local agricultural or livestock advisor.

***If your agricultural land is contaminated with oil, please contact the ExxonMobil Pipeline Company Claims Line (1-888-382-0043)***

ExxonMobil Pipeline Company (ExxonMobil) has established a Claims Department and requests that landowners potentially impacted by oil file a claim. ExxonMobil will work with you to address impacted areas, including contaminated vegetation. These activities will be coordinated with you and approved by the Unified Command.

### **CROPS**

#### ***Bioremediation***

Under natural conditions and over time, oil will break down on its own through a process called "bioremediation."

Bioremediation occurs when soil micro-bacteria attach to oil, ingest it, and break it down.

Microbes need surface area, moisture, and air to effectively bioremediate contaminated soil. Tilling will aid this process. Follow your normal procedures for fertilizing and rotating crops.

#### ***Land & Crop Use***

The following information serves as a flow chart for land and crops which are contaminated with oil.

If you have a perennial forage crop that has not been harvested, do so ASAP. Crops which are harvested from contaminated areas should not be used for consumption.

If the stand is still good, follow recommended fertilizer application, harrow to incorporate contaminated soils, and irrigate, if possible.

If the stand is poor, till the soil to incorporate any contaminated vegetation into the soil and begin preparing seedbed for spring 2012.

Alfalfa fields will need to be out for two growing seasons so that the new alfalfa does not become readily diseased because of the recent flooding.

If you have annual crops, identify areas of oil contamination. If possible, plow those crops into the field. If crops cannot be plowed, remove them, but do not use crops from contaminated areas for consumption.

**IMPORTANT:** Contact your crop insurance agent before crops are removed.

In both scenarios, apply recommended fertilizer prior to first tillage. Prepare seedbed as normal for 2012 crop.

In all cases, have soil tested for oil residue prior to 2012 crop and for pH, nutrients, salts, etc. so that the field is properly fertilized for 2012.

These are general guidelines. Soil and crops experts are available to inspect your property for specific remediation recommendations.

## **LIVESTOCK**

### ***What are the effects of oil on livestock?***

Oil on the soil surface is more likely to be ingested than oil mixed into tilled soils. Oil ingestion can interfere with your livestock's ability to absorb fat soluble vitamins, and could harm the rumen and intestinal systems.

### ***What are the symptoms of exposure on livestock?***

Fortunately, animals' acute sense of smell will discourage them from wanting to graze in contaminated areas. However, if an animal has ingested a glob of oil, it will likely experience acute symptoms including diarrhea, feces with the odor of oil, or refusal to eat. If you recognize these symptoms, please contact your veterinarian immediately. If animals exhibit signs of oil exposure, they may not be eligible for slaughter.

### ***What about long-term effects of exposure from grazing on stained vegetation?***

Long-term exposures can cause gastrointestinal distress and potential organ damage. Animals may refuse to eat or isolate themselves from the herd.

### ***How do you treat livestock that have grazed on oil stained vegetation?***

If you suspect that livestock has grazed on oil stained vegetation, monitor their behavior and eating patterns for any changes. Call your veterinarian if you suspect any problems. Also, the areas of current grazing should be evaluated for remaining existing surface contamination.

### ***What about grazing areas?***

In order to discourage livestock consumption of oil-contaminated crops, make sure the animals have sufficient salt and mineral supplements.

If you are having trouble keeping livestock away from contaminated areas, please contact ExxonMobil Claims.

### ***Where can I get more information?***

First contact your local Agricultural Extension Agent. To find the location of your local extension agent check your phone book or visit <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/Extension/index.html>. Stay tuned to your local radio and television stations and newspaper web pages for the most up to date information on the response.

For more information:

ExxonMobil Claims (toll-free)  
1-888-382-0043

Or visit EPA's web site:  
<http://epa.gov/yellowstoneriverspill>

The following agencies have been consulted on this document and are available to provide additional information

Montana Department of Agriculture  
Montana Department of Livestock  
Montana DEQ  
Yellowstone County Extension Services  
Montana State University

