

COMMUNITY BMPs

Neighbor to Neighbor Relations

U. S. Census data indicate that people are leaving the urban population centers for suburban and rural areas. People may move to rural areas with an expectation that their new home will be located in a quiet, peaceful, rustic, and isolated setting. The consequence of this population migration is that more and more people, with little or no understanding of cranberry production, are moving into homes in close proximity to cranberry bogs. Late evening or early morning bog inspections and frost protecting, as well as helicopter activity, can be quite disconcerting to your neighbors. The management practices outlined below can be helpful for developing and maintaining congenial neighbor-to-neighbor relations.

Recommended Practices

Communication is the key to good neighbor relations.

Know your neighbors. Effective communication with abutting property owners, whether sympathetic or adverse to cranberry production, is the most effective way to prevent and resolve problems. Talk to your neighbors about all aspects of cranberry production. In most instances, an informed neighbor will be a better neighbor. Maintain limited communication with adversarial neighbors in an effort to anticipate and resolve problems as they arise.

Invite neighbors over to observe the harvest or other production activities. Make a special effort to talk to neighborhood children about paying attention to signs and postings.

Send neighbors a copy of the pamphlet, 'Neighbor to Neighbor-An Information Guide. What to expect when living near a cranberry bog', published by the CCCGA (<http://www.cranberries.org/cranberries/neighbor2neighbor.html>). The guide provides an easy-to-understand description of the various management practices that take place during each season of the year.

Keep in mind that neighbors who are allowed limited access to your property are less likely to cause vandalism and be antagonistic. Neighbors are often great allies and also take pride in helping to monitor the cranberry bog for suspicious activities.

Pesticide applications are typically the greatest concern for neighbors around a cranberry bog. Educate your neighbors about why, when, and how you use pesticides.

Explain that all pesticides must be tested and registered for use with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and that certified and licensed applicators must complete yearly training requirements to maintain their license or certification.

Describe the philosophies and practices associated with integrated pest management (IPM) to your neighbors. Many people are unaware of what IPM is, but are very receptive to the idea once they understand the basic principles.

Explain that most pesticide applications take place at times of low wind, typically in the early

morning or late evening hours. These off-time applications are not an attempt to 'sneak in' a pesticide application.

Be selective in the pesticides you use. When choosing a pesticide, evaluate and consider both human and environmental risks.

If you apply through the irrigation system, use high efficiency nozzles, screens, and half-heads when appropriate in sensitive areas. If applications are made by helicopter, work with pilots to insure drift is minimized and that applications reach the target areas. Refer to the Pesticide Application BMP for more details.

Explain the importance of adhering to pesticide notices and sign postings. Be sure your neighbors understand what the pesticide signs mean. Inform them about the mandated restricted entry intervals.

Allowing neighbors the use of your private property as 'open green space' for fishing, hunting, walking, and other leisure activities can be both an asset and a liability. Educate your neighbors about the proper procedures to follow prior, during, and after pesticide applications and about the importance of restricted entry times. Explain to your neighbors what the various signs mean.

Drive the entire perimeter of your bog before any pesticide application to insure that the area is free of people and pets.

Inform your neighbors about upcoming pesticide applications.

If you plan to apply an early morning pesticide application, consider notifying your neighbors the evening before.

Consider using a telephone tree information system to notify neighbors about upcoming pesticide applications. The information tree works by notifying a few designated neighbors who then each call two neighbors who in turn call two neighbors until all interested parties have been notified.

You may want to consider employing local phone services which offer automated options of providing your recorded message to your neighbors.

Be sensitive to the concerns and well-being of your neighbors.

Some chemicals or their carriers have strong odors which some people may find offensive. Application of a strong-smelling pesticide when the humidity is high and the air is very still may increase the chances of neighbor complaints. A very light wind, 1-2 mph, can be effective in quickly dissipating the pesticide and reducing concerns from neighbors about pesticide odors.

Advise neighbors to turn off their air conditioning systems to reduce the likelihood that odors will be drawn into their homes.

Anticipate your neighbors' reactions when you undertake an activity that abuts their properties.

Consider night-time delivery of bee hives. Place them as far away from abutters' houses and pathways when possible.

Operate machinery or application equipment to minimize noise and dust.

Maintain adequate mufflers on the exhausts of machinery and pumps. Where possible,

minimize exhaust noise by directing the exhaust away from residential housing.

Whenever possible, minimize movement of large trucks and harvest vehicles in early morning or late evening hours. If a work area is particularly dusty, consider wetting down the area prior to truck or equipment activity to minimize drift of dust.

If you use aerial applications, advise pilots to use the least sensitive routes when entering and leaving the property.

Keep your bogs and adjoining property clean and free of debris.

A clean and well managed cranberry operation demonstrates pride of ownership and portrays a high level of professionalism to outsiders, whether it be residential neighbors or regulatory agency personnel. If you must maintain a stockpile of pipe, culverts, and equipment parts, try to keep the materials orderly and out of the view of your neighbors.

If your bogs are situated in a remote area, make sure access roads are secured with a locked gate to minimize illegal dumping of refuse.

Properly post your property as required.

Post your property with the appropriate sign(s) prior to a pesticide application. Be sure to remove sign postings within the legal time limit.

Sign posting requirements change periodically. Consult the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Association (<http://www.cranberries.org/growers/advisories.html>) for current requirements.

Notify your neighbors of aerial fertilizer applications. Even though posting is not mandated, consider posting an 'aerial fertilizer application' sign.

Be cautious, but courteous, to adversarial neighbors.

Some neighbors can become very distressed when it comes to pesticide use. It may be best to avoid confrontations when emotions, rather than reason, take over. Always be courteous and keep your distance. If the problem becomes unmanageable, contact the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Association for resolution suggestions.

If a neighbor decides to sell their home that is near your cranberry bog, it has become a common habit for the potential new homeowners to actually contact the bog owner. Typically the interested homeowners want to meet the cranberry bog owner, ask general questions about farming practices. Most often, this type of communication prevents future issues.

For more information:

Neighbor to Neighbor-An Information Guide. What to expect when living near a cranberry bog. (<http://www.cranberries.org/cranberries/neighbor2neighbor.html>).

Sign posting. Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Association,
<http://www.cranberries.org/growers/advisories.html>

Updated by Hilary Sandler, Dawn Gates, and CCCGA Environmental Committee. 2010.

Neighbor-to-Neighbor Relations Checklist

- ✓ Maintain good communications with your neighbors.
- ✓ Explain what your common farming practices are and be sensitive to the concerns of your neighbors.
- ✓ Properly post your property as required.