



Composting Farm Mortality – Checklist*

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*Compiled in part from: Natural Rendering - Composting Livestock Mortality & Butcher Waste. Cornell Cooperative Extension, 2002, and Composting Guidelines, University of Delaware, 2005.

- Locate Compost piles away (200 feet) from possible sites of water contamination. Sites should be in locations away from neighbors and can remain undisturbed for months at a time.
- Materials used in composting should have larger pieces (3-4") to allow for air movement through the composting cycle. Sawdust and smaller materials can be used in an absorptive layer in the pile under the animals. High carbon content materials should be considered as they keep the composting cycle running. For poultry use .8-1.0 inches litter/lb live weight per ft². Or another recipe is a ratio of 1:1½:1 of chicken, manure and straw by volume.
- Use 24" base with two feet of material surrounding the carcasses. In composting bins, keep animals at least 6 inches away from any wall. Put ¼ - ½ inch space between boards in wall and door areas for good air circulation. A corn crib door arrangement on the bin front will work as well.
- Lance rumen of large animals to prevent bloat / explosion and to speed the composting process. Wet the feathers of poultry to help aid in the start of composting. Layer carbon sources between layers of animals in building windrows or bins.
- Turning of materials can be done after 3-4 months or longer. A second composting cycle will start after this turning. Compost pile materials can be re-used for more mortality after this time. Move materials to the holding (back) bin in two stage composting bin shelters to complete another composting cycle.
- Composting temps found in piles will range between 104-140 degrees (F). Leaching or exposed animals in piles will need further attention.

Resources:

Penn State Composting Website: <http://composting.cas.psu.edu>

Cornell University Composting Website: <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/Composting.html>

University of Delaware: <http://www.rec.udel.edu/Poultry/poultryindex.htm>

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