



# LARGE ANIMAL MORTALITY COMPOSTING





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## composting

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# Livestock Mortality Documents

Livestock Mortality Management (Disposal) Agdex 400/29-1

Swine Mortality Composting Agdex 440/29-1

Poultry Mortality Composting Agdex 450/29-1

Livestock Mortality Burial Techniques Agdex 400/29-2

# mortality disposal

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Mortalities happen. Under Alberta's Destruction and Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation of the *Animal Health Act*, Appendix A, the owner of a dead animal shall dispose of the animal within 7 days of its death. Mortalities can be composted, incinerated, buried, rendered, or naturally disposed. Today, animal agriculture is challenged to discover innovative ways to dispose of livestock mortalities. Composting of livestock mortalities is one option. There are two general approaches to livestock mortality composting: bin systems and windrow systems.

The environmental considerations for improper disposal include:

- Odour – decomposition of organic matter, particularly the anaerobic (lacking oxygen) breakdown of proteins by bacteria, will produce a foul odour.
- Scavengers – ravens, magpies, coyotes, etc. and insects can transmit disease and are a nuisance.
- Pathogens – disease-causing spores may still be viable.
- Excess Nutrients – concentrated source of nitrogen.
- Nuisance – visible carcasses and bones fuel social issues and can puncture tires.

Composting in a properly managed system will work to prevent livestock disease transmission, protect air and water quality and reduce the nuisance of carcasses and bones. Composting improperly in an unmanaged system can result in a large nuisance and risks social repercussions.

Costs related to composting mortalities include the time to manage the process, operating costs and equipment costs. Managing the process requires time to form the base for composting, to stockpile carbon materials, to add mortalities, to turn the windrow and the time to land apply the finished compost. Annual operating costs include fuel, labour, land costs for the site and the costs of the carbon materials. The equipment costs for composting include the use of a front end loader tractor or another means to build and turn the material.

# potential environmental and biosecurity risk

lowest risk

- Compost in a properly managed system or burn in an approved incinerator on the farm.
- Bury in appropriate soils or store frozen for spring burial or rendering plant pick-up (Refer to Livestock Mortality Burial Techniques, Agdex 400/29 – 2).
- Partially buried or carcass left outside for scavengers or to decay.

highest risk



# livestock mortality composting

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- Inexpensive alternative for large animal disposal.
- Can kill pathogens and reduce chance to spread disease.
- Destroys the viability of weed seeds.
- Environmentally safe and valuable soil carbon material.
- Can be operated year round.
- Utilizes equipment available on-farm.
- Low odour generated.
- Low labour and management requirements.
- Publically acceptable.
- “Green” option – recycles and promotes biosecurity.
- Expands social acceptance.

Composting is the biological breakdown of organic materials in an aerobic (presence of oxygen) environment. Livestock mortality composting requires a high-carbon material with moderate moisture levels and good porosity to surround the carcasses which have a high moisture content and nearly zero porosity. The carcasses and carbon materials are layered into the pile and no mixing is done until after the high-rate (primary) stage of composting has occurred. In and around the animal, the process is anaerobic but as gasses are produced and move away, they enter an aerobic zone. Here the gasses are trapped in the surrounding material which supports bacteria to form a biological filter, or a biofilter. Composting livestock mortalities is best described as an “above ground burial in a biofilter with pathogen kill by high temperature.”

The carbon material around the carcass serves several key functions:

- Surrounds the carcasses making them less accessible and attractive to pests.
- Absorbs excess liquids released by decomposing carcasses.
- Provides structure and porosity which promotes air movement throughout the material.
- Provides an energy source for microbial growth.

Avoid turning the pile during the primary stage. After this time, the pile is moved to begin the secondary stage. Moving the pile introduces air and mixes the contents leading to uniformity in the finished compost. The secondary pile is then turned and placed in a pile for storage. Bones sometimes remain intact after completion of the storage process. They are generally quite brittle and pose no health risks or danger to equipment when land applied.



While composting is a natural process, it requires proper conditions to occur rapidly, minimize odour and prevent nuisance problems.

# keys to success

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## Nutrient Balance (C:N)

The proper compost mix requires both carbon (C) and nitrogen (N) at the proper ratio near 30:1. This will result in a composting process that generates little odour yet offers an environment where microorganisms can flourish. Fresh carcasses have a low C:N of 14:1. Plant materials such as wood chips, sawdust, chopped corn stover, shredded paper or straw have a high C:N for on-farm mortality composting.

## Moisture

Like all living things, microorganisms need water. To encourage their growth and rapid composting, water content of the mixture should be 50 – 60% w.b. (wet basis). It is important to avoid excess water due to the potential for odour and excess liquids released by decomposing carcasses. When fresh large animal carcasses are used, there is usually no need to add extra moisture. If the carbon material is extremely dry (>85% dry matter) or the carcasses have dried out before composting, water may be needed.

## Temperature

Temperature is a good indicator of the “health” of the compost process. A probe-type dial thermometer with a 1 m (39 in) stem is good for monitoring temperatures, Figure 1. Temperatures should be checked frequently throughout the pile. Normally, temperatures in the primary stage should rise to 55 – 65 °C (131 °F –149 °F) in 1 or 2 days and peak at 60 – 70 °C (140 °F –158 °F) within 7 to 10 days.

Temperatures above 55 °C (131 °F) over 3 days will kill parasites and fecal and plant pathogens within the pile. However, to maintain high temperatures, the pile must be adequately sized, 2.4 – 3.6 m (8 – 12 ft) wide at the base and 1.5 – 2.1 m (5 – 7 ft) tall. At temperatures above 66 °C (150 °F), microbial activity declines rapidly as compost temperature exceeds 71 °C (160 °F).

Although experience indicates that temperatures above 75 °C (167 °F) are rare, a remote possibility exists that temperatures could rise to spontaneous combustion levels. If temperatures appear to be rising towards 75 °C (167 °F), the compost should be spread on the ground to cool.



Figure 1. Temperature Measurement

### Carbon material selection

Sawdust is an ideal carbon material for large animal mortality composting due to:

- Small particle size.
- Open spaces (porosity).
- Bulk density of approximately 24 to 111 kg/m<sup>3</sup> (40 to 186 ft/yd<sup>3</sup>).
- pH of 7.0 to 8.0.
- Ease of handling.
- Absorbency.
- High carbon content.

If sawdust is not available, other plant materials such as wood chips or straw can be used. Since these tend to be less absorptive and have poorer insulating properties than sawdust, their use requires more care during cold or wet weather.

Table 1. Guidelines for composting: major factors

Major factors	Reasonable range	Preferred range
Nutrient balance, C:N	20:1 – 40:1	30:1 – 35:1
Moisture	45 – 65% w.b.	50 – 60% w.b.
Temperature	45 – 68 °C (113 – 155 °F)	54 – 66 °C (130 – 150 °F)
Particle size	0.8-1.2 cm (1/8 – 1/2 in)	Depends on material
Porosity	30 – 50%	35 – 45%
Bulk density	<640 kg/m <sup>3</sup> (1100 lbs/yd <sup>3</sup> )	
pH	5.8 – 9.0	6.5 – 8.0
Oxygen concentration	>5%	>10%

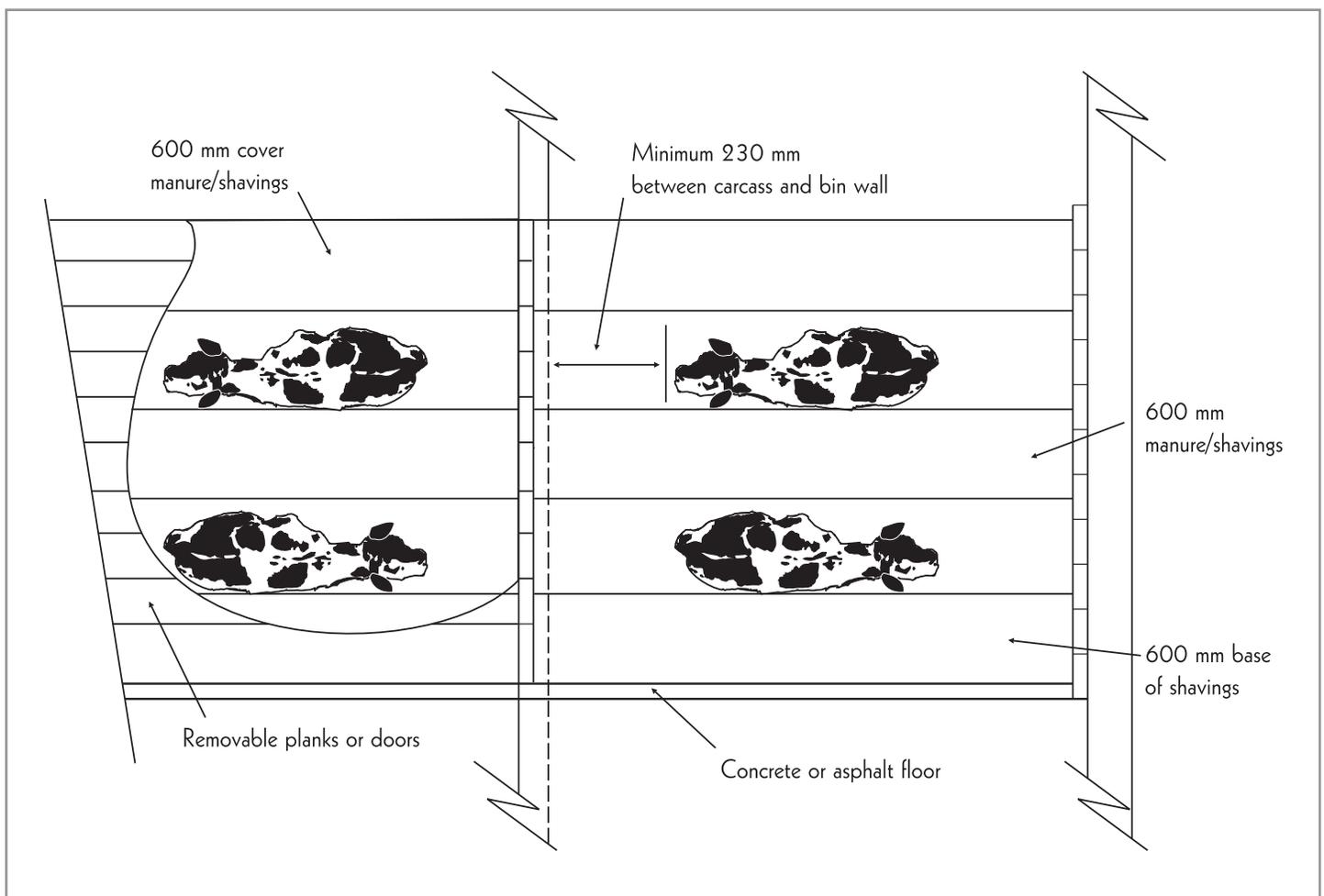
# build and manage compost piles

Large animal composting can be accomplished by layering in either a bin or a windrow. The material is layered the same for both systems. Begin by placing a 600 mm (24 in) layer of carbon material such as sawdust on the bottom, Figure 2 and 3.

Carcasses are placed on top of the base layer at least 230 mm (9 in) away from the edge of the base. Carcasses should be 600 mm (24 in.) apart. Too many carcasses in one spot leads to localized wet areas and poor composting. Small pigs may be grouped or placed with less carbon material between them.

After the carcasses are positioned, they are covered immediately with 600 mm (24 in) of carbon material. Layering of carcasses and carbon material continues until the pile is 1.2 – 1.8 m (4 – 6 ft) tall. Cover the pile with 600 mm (24 in) of carbon materials.

**Figure 2. Composting bins built in layers**

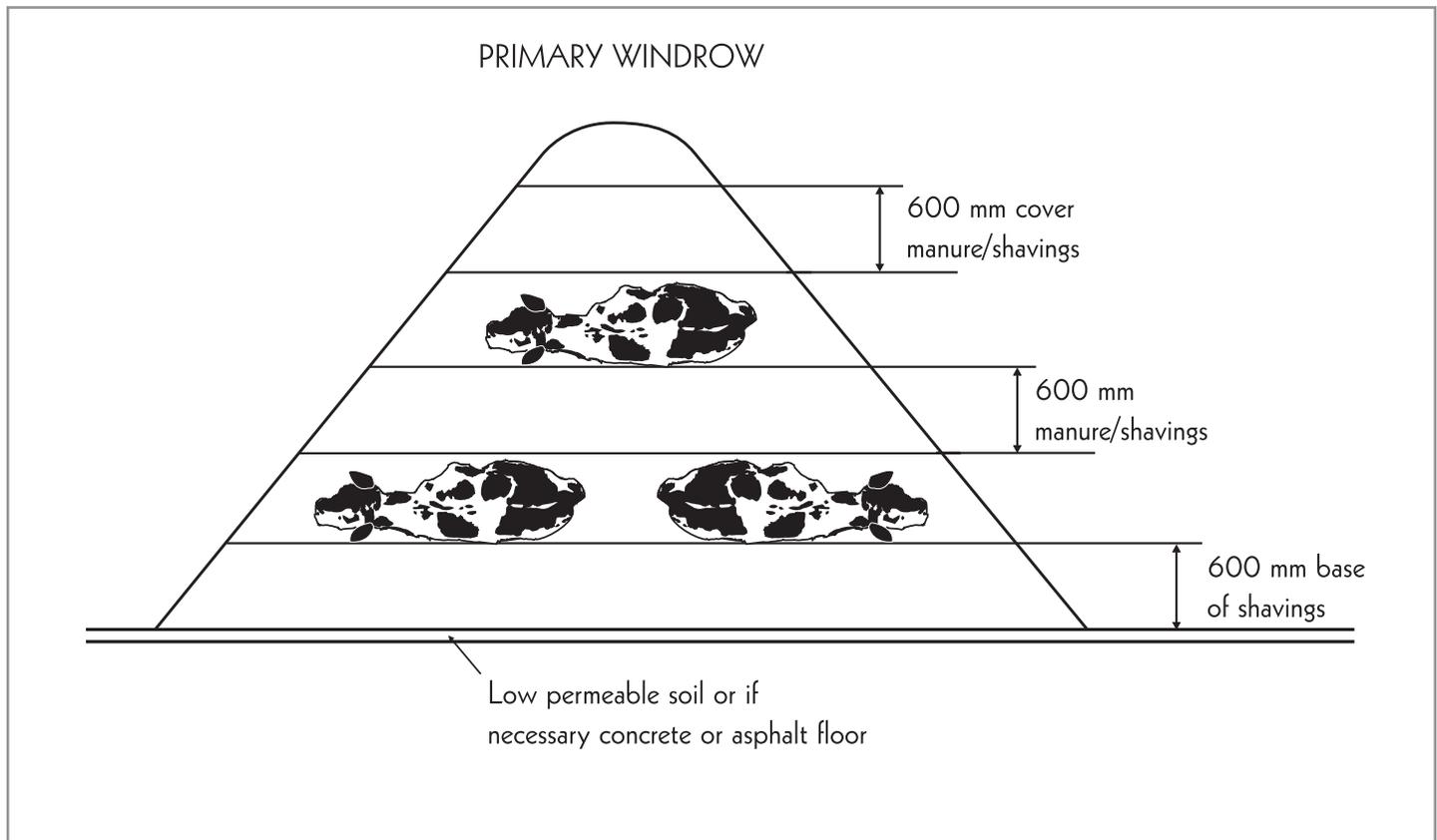


Carcasses should be 600 mm (24 in.) apart



Too many carcasses in one spot leads to localized wet areas and poor composting.

Figure 3. Composting windrows built in layers



## Two Stage Process

After the initial piling of a windrow or completely filling a bin, the material will heat up quickly and then gradually start to cool. The cooling is a normal sign that organisms are starting to be deficient in one of the ingredients. This primary stage for large animal mortalities lasts approximately 3 months. It may be necessary to extend this period of time if an unusual number of large carcasses are composted or if ambient temperatures are low. Mix the pile to re-introduce oxygen and redistribute the composting material to encourage rapid decomposition causing the temperatures to rise again. This secondary stage lasts approximately another 3 months.

By the end of the second heating stage, carcasses are normally reduced to a few brittle bone fragments that are clean and free of tissues that cause odours and attract insects and scavengers. Large carcasses may need a third heating stage.

Failure to manage the system will result in odours that attracts flies, scavengers and other vermin to the site.

Composting is considered complete when there is:

- No soft animal tissue.
- No bones or bone fragments larger than 15 cm (6 in) in any dimension.
- No other animal matter larger than 2.5 cm (1 in) in any dimension.
- No offensive odours.



The compost structure is designed for daily losses and occasional periods of high loss.

To do this, there are two basic designs bin and windrow composting

# composter design

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## Bin Composting

Bin composting improves the aesthetics of mortality composting. As described previously, the primary stage lasts 3 months before moving to a second bin or to a windrow for the secondary stage. The layout of the composter should be flexible. This will accommodate existing features, restrictions, traffic patterns, equipment or other factors particular to a given operation. No specific layout is best in all cases.

The following points should be taken into consideration when designing a mortality bin composter.

1. Surface water should be diverted away or around the compost site to eliminate contamination.
2. Depth of compost bins should not exceed 2 carcasses high. This will reduce compaction effects and the potential for spontaneous combustion.
3. Since small carcasses are usually placed inside the primary compost bins by hand, the front of the bin should be designed so that carcasses will not have to be lifted too high. This can be done with removable drop boards that slide into vertical channels or with doors that split horizontally.
4. The width of compost bins is usually selected to accommodate loading/unloading equipment. Tractor front-end loaders or skidsteers are typically used. Bin width should be at least 0.3 m (12 in) wider but preferably 0.6 – 1 m (2 – 3 ft) wider than the bucket. If wheels on the equipment are wider than the bucket, the bin should be widened accordingly.
5. The length of the compost bins is generally 3 – 4.5 m (10 – 15 ft) for large animal. A disadvantage of longer bins is that they are more difficult to enter and exit.
6. Several smaller primary composting bins work more efficiently than a few very large bins.
7. Even though calculations may indicate fewer, a minimum of two primary bins is required. This allows use of the second bin while the last additions to the first bin are composting.
8. Secondary composting volume may be provided in bins that are duplicates of primary bins or a large bin.
9. It may be desirable to add one or two extra primary composting bins. These bins can be used to store ingredients such as litter, sawdust, etc. If unusually high mortalities occur, the extra bins could be put into service. Experience has shown that some ingredient storage at the composter site greatly facilitates management of the process.



Extra space is inexpensive and provides valuable flexibility for contingencies such as busy times of the year when bins cannot be emptied on time or occasional batches requiring additional time to decompose completely.

Temporary bins for mortality composting have been constructed using large bales as sidewalls with no roof. This type of construction is less expensive and provides flexibility, such as the number of bins and their location, that a permanent structure would not. When the need arises, bale bins can also be used along with a permanent structure facility to provide additional composting capacity.

## Sizing the Composter

The design, number and size of bins can be calculated once an estimate of the number and weight of mortalities has been determined. Appendix B contains these calculations.

Bins with 15 – 30 m<sup>3</sup> (530 – 1060 ft<sup>3</sup>) of capacity are recommended for large animal carcasses. These bins have a floor area of approximately 10 – 20 m<sup>2</sup> (108 – 216 ft<sup>2</sup>).

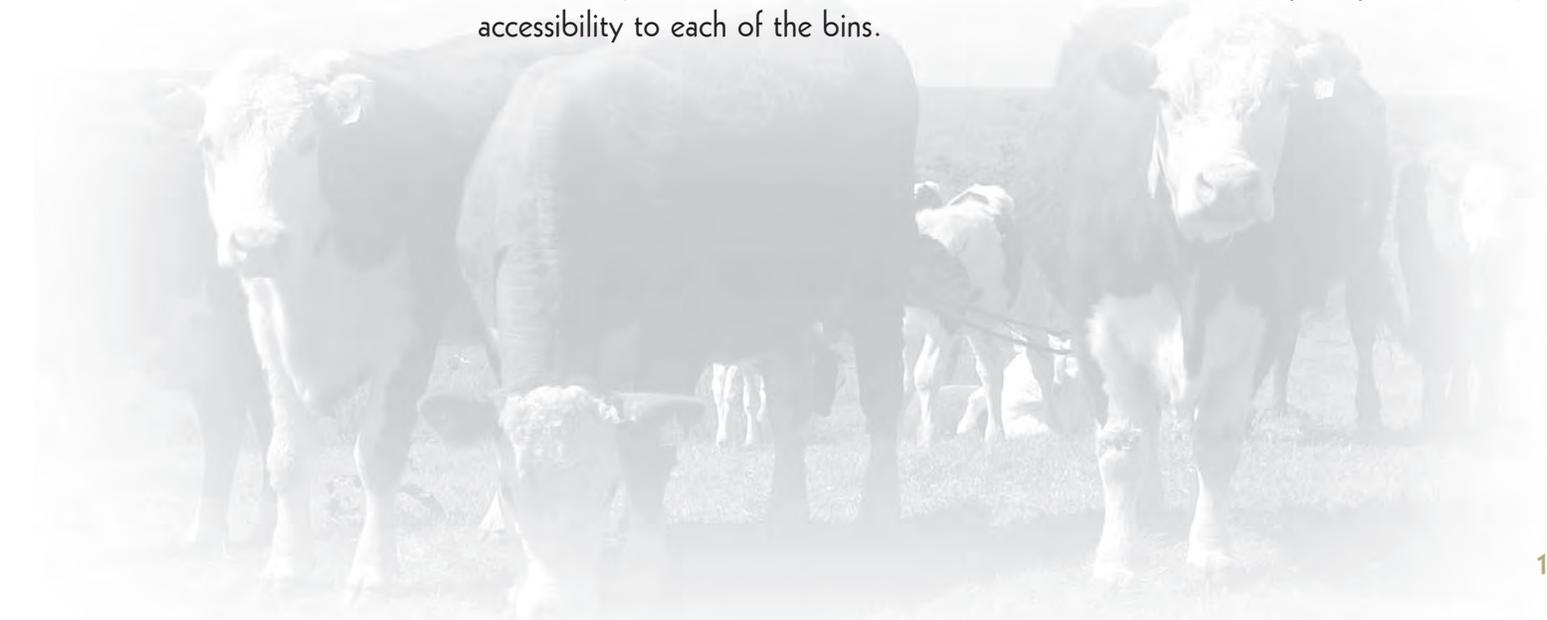
Extremely large bins that take a long time to fill are undesirable as they lead to unnecessarily long heating times since the first carcasses were placed. Total bin volume recommendations suggested are based on average daily death losses.

Bin systems constructed for composting large animal typically require 1.25 m<sup>3</sup>/kg (20 ft<sup>3</sup>/lb) of room for primary composting and the same for secondary composting. For example, a farm averaging 50 kg (110 lb) of loss each day would need approximately 62.5 m<sup>3</sup> (2200 ft<sup>3</sup>) of primary capacity and the same amount for secondary bin space.

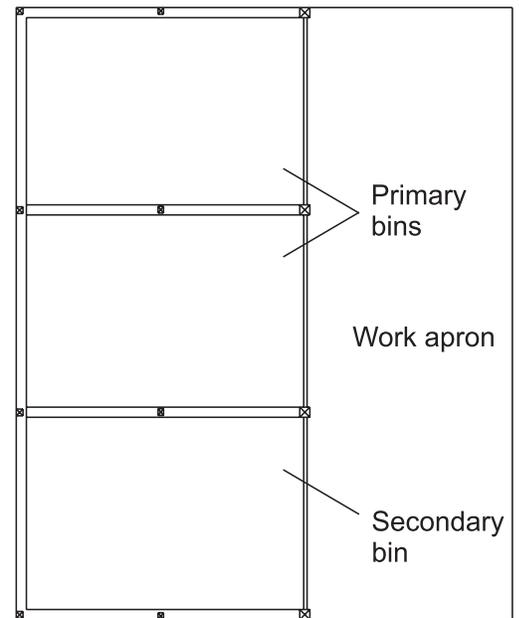
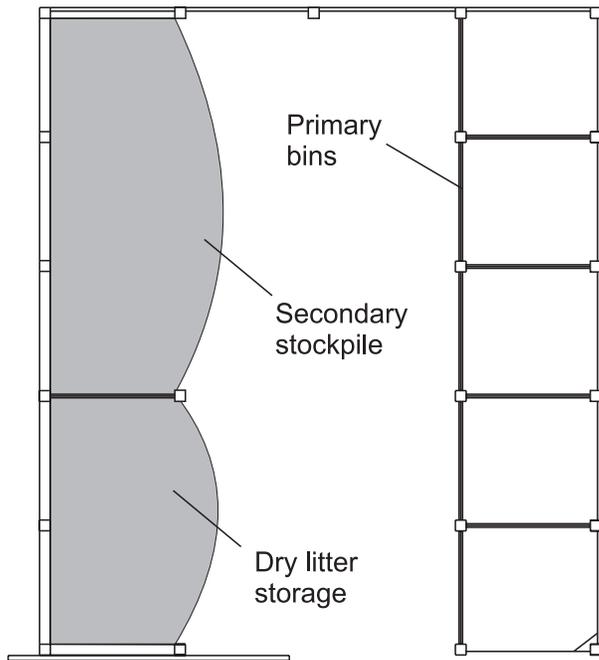
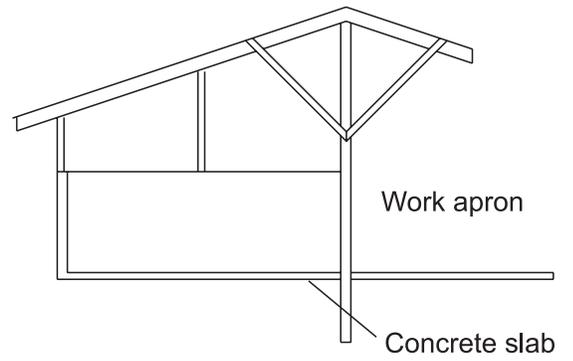
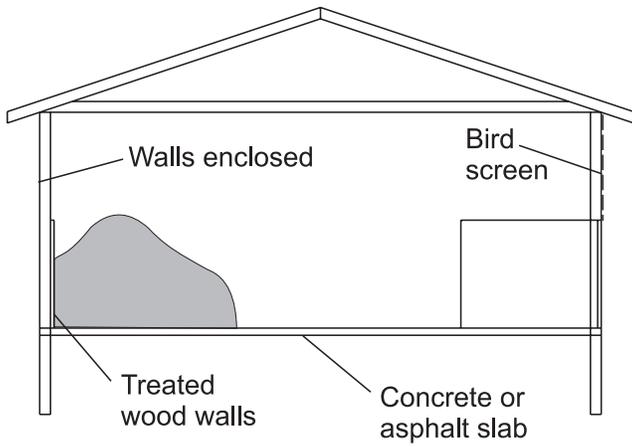
Appendix B illustrates the method for determining the number of primary bins needed for a large animal mortality composting system. Primary bins may be arranged in any configuration. Generally, it is more efficient to arrange the bins so that primary compost can be quickly and easily moved to the secondary composting area.

Figure 4, Layout A is a schematic of a composter with 5 primary bins and a large floor area for stockpiling the secondary compost. It also includes ingredient storage. This building can be enclosed on three sides (one end door) and the wall above the primary bins can be screened. These added features improve visual aesthetics, reduce odours and restrict bird access for better disease control.

Figure 4, Layout B is a schematic of a composter with 2 primary bins and 1 secondary bin. The bins are enclosed on 3 sides. The work apron provides easy accessibility to each of the bins.



**Figure 4 – Two typical composting unit layouts**



**Layout A**

Composting bins and stockpiling with central work area.

**Layout B**

Composting bins in open front shed.

## Windrow Composting

Windrow composting is a relatively simple and inexpensive way to manage loss scenarios due to disease, ventilation failures or other unpredictable events which would require large facilities. As described previously, the primary stage lasts 3 months before mixing the windrow to begin the secondary stage. Windrows are generally not sheltered from the wind, rain and snow which can affect the process. Because walls and roofs are not required in these designs, it is easier to load, unload and mix the materials. Windrows are constructed on all weather surfaces such as low permeable soils or concrete.

The length of the windrow is extended as mortalities occur.

The following points should be taken into consideration for site preparation and operation.

1. A composting pad with a 2% slope should be constructed on 0.5 m (1.6 ft) of clay with permeability less than  $5 \times 10^{-8}$  m/s ( $1.6 \times 10^{-7}$  ft/s) or an alternative with equivalent protection such as concrete.
2. The site should have a run-on control system to prevent surface water flowing onto the composting area.
3. The site should have a run-off control system to protect surface water from contamination.
4. To mix the material, start at one end of the windrow and move the contents to form a new windrow .
5. If the material is dry, add water while turning.
6. Cover any exposed carcass tissue after the windrow has been turned.
7. Be sure the piles are mounded to shed rainfall.

## Sizing the Windrow

The number of carcasses and the average weight needs to be known. Recommended windrow dimensions are 3.6 m (12 ft) wide at the base and no more than 2.1 m (7 ft) tall. To assist you in determining yearly losses, sawdust requirements and windrow volume, refer to Appendix B.





When choosing a composting location, consult the local office of the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB).

**Calgary Office**

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Calgary AB T2P 3G4  
Phone: 403-662-3990  
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**Edmonton Office**

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9940-106 Street  
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**Fairview Office**

Provincial Building  
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Box 159, Fairview AB T0H 1L0  
Phone: 780-835-7111  
Fax: 780-835-3259

**Lethbridge Office**

Agriculture Centre  
100, 5401-1st Avenue S.  
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4V6  
Phone: 403-381-5166  
Fax: 403-381-5806

**Morinville Office**

Room 201, Provincial Building  
10008-107 Street  
Morinville, AB T8R 1L3  
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**Red Deer Office**

Provincial Building  
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Red Deer AB T4N 6K8  
Phone: 403-340-5241  
Fax: 403-340-5599

# planning considerations

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Actual construction of a composter can take many different forms, all producing good results. Some features to consider are location, type of structure, construction materials and ingredient storage.

## Location/Access

Location of a composter should follow the criteria in the Destruction and Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation of the *Animal Health Act*. It states that the compost pile must be:

- At least 100 m (328 ft) from wells or other domestic water intakes, streams, creeks, ponds, springs rivers, irrigation canals, dugouts and high water marks of lakes and at least 25 m (82 ft) from the edge of a coulee or embankment.
- At least 100 m (328 ft) from any residences.
- At least 100 m (328 ft) from the boundary of any land owned or leased by another person unless written consent to the pile being closer to the boundary.
- At least 300 m from any provincial highway.

The location should also take into account any impact it may have on the farm residence and neighbouring residences. While offensive odours are not usually generated in the composting process, the handling of dead birds, manure and litter may not be aesthetically pleasing. When locating a composter, consideration should be given to traffic patterns required for moving dead birds, the required ingredients and removing the finished compost from the composter. The composter site should be well-drained and provide all-weather access roads and work areas.

## Foundation/Floor

Composting should have an impervious, weight-bearing foundation for all composting areas. This feature ensures all-weather operation, helps secure the composter against rodent access and generally minimizes the potential for contamination of the surrounding area. Consideration should also be given to providing a concrete floor in traffic areas and work alleys. Experience has shown that with the frequent loading and unloading activities associated with composting, dirt or even gravel areas tend to become rutted and potholed.

## Construction Materials

Any portion of the compost structure such as poles and sidewalls that will be in contact with dirt or composting material should be constructed with pressure treated lumber or other rot-resistant materials.

Temporary bins can also be constructed with bales of low-quality hay or straw. This type of construction is less expensive and provides flexibility such as the number of bins and their location that a permanent structure would not.

## Roof

A roof covering compost bins controls rainwater and the moisture content of the composting mass. Roofing the working area also facilitates all-weather activities. Additionally, any ingredient storage areas or bins should be roofed to preserve the ingredients at the desired moisture content. Roof heights must be adequate to ensure clearance for front-end loaders.

## Ingredient Storage

Having sufficient amounts of ingredients such as sawdust and litter present at the compost site greatly facilitates the day-to-day management of the process. In determining the amount of storage needed, consideration should be given to the frequency with which ingredient transfer and restocking can be managed. Storage requirements may vary considerably among different operations. Bins used for storage can double as primary composting bins during periods of high death loss or they may facilitate the expansion of the composting area if the farm is increased. Ingredient storage does not have to be in bins. If the composting area can be constructed in conjunction with a litter storage facility, handling may be greatly simplified.

## Utilities

A water line with a freeze-proof hydrant at the compost facility will aid in adjusting the moisture content of the recipe (if needed) and further facilitate cleanup and wash down of personnel, equipment and the composting area. A minimum 20-amp electrical circuit will allow for the use of power tools, lights or other appliances that may be required at the compost facility.

# compost uses

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Well composted mortalities can be used as a soil conditioner and nutrient source for crops. The soil-amending and plant food properties of compost make it a valuable by-product of poultry production.

Users of compost are encouraged to obtain a nutrient analysis of the product prior to its use. It is recommended that mortality compost not be spread on active pasture land or home gardens. Poorly composted animal mortalities may contain bones and other mortality residue that may damage equipment and be unsightly when land applied.

# troubleshooting

Symptom	Problem	Recommendation
Pile fails to reach high temperatures	The pile is lacking oxygen because the material is too dense or contains too much moisture	Rebuild the pile with coarser material to allow for air to circulate
	The pile is too small	Increase size to at least 1.2 x 1.2 x 1.2 m (4 x 4 x 4 ft)
	Winter composting with not enough of an insulation layer	Provide an insulation layer of carbon material, 600 mm (2 ft)
	Pile is too dry	Add water
Temperature in the pile begins to drop near the end of the primary stage	The pile is lacking oxygen	Turn the pile to reintroduce air and mix the materials
	The pile is lacking moisture	Turn the pile and check to ensure the moisture content is between 45 and 65%
Odour	Too wet	Add bulking material and turn
	Too low C:N	Evaluate bulking material and adjust as necessary
Flies	Inadequate cover	Cover with 600 mm (2 ft) of carbon material
	Poor sanitation conditions	Provide an adequate base of carbon material to absorb all liquids from the mortalities. Provide run-on and run-off protection, due to precipitation, at the site by grading the pad to a 1-2% slope
	Too wet	Add bulking material and turn the pile
	Failure to reach proper temperature	Assess C:N
Scavenging animals	Inadequate cover	Maintain 600 mm (2 ft). Avoid initial entry with fence or barrier. Ensure the pile is heating properly



## caution

If an animal is known or suspected to have died from an infectious or reportable disease, the owner must report this to authorities and dispose of the animal in the manner they recommend. For an animal that has been euthanized, owners need to prevent scavengers from gaining access to the dead animal. These animals cannot be disposed of by natural disposal.

Reportable Diseases are those which require action to control or eradicate because they are a threat to animal or human health, food safety or the economy.

Notifiable Diseases are those which simply require monitoring for trade purposes or to understand their presence in Alberta. No action will be taken.

Anyone who knows or ought to know that any of these diseases are or may be present in an animal **MUST** report that fact to the **Office of the Chief Provincial Veterinarian** within 24 hours by calling 1-800-524-0051.

# appendix A act and regulation

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In this Regulation,

- (a) “Act” means the *Animal Health Act*;
- (b) “composting”, in respect of a dead animal, means a managed process for aerobic decomposition of the dead animal;
- (c) “dead animal” means
  - (i) all or part of an animal that has died from a cause other than having been slaughtered or killed for
    - (A) human or animal consumption, or
    - (B) an animal product or animal by-product,
  - (ii) inedible offal, condemned material or waste material from an animal that was slaughtered or killed for
    - (A) animal consumption, or
    - (B) an animal product or animal by-product, and
  - (iii) inedible offal, condemned material or waste material from an animal processed at a meat facility;
- (d) “meat facility” means
  - (i) a meat facility within the meaning of the *Meat Inspection Act*, and
  - (ii) an establishment within the meaning of the *Meat Inspection Act* (Canada) in which animals are slaughtered;
- (e) “rendering plant” means a rendering plant within the meaning of the *Health of Animals Act* (Canada).

## Application

- 2 (1)** This Regulation does not apply to wildlife as defined in the *Wildlife Act* or controlled animals as defined in the *Wildlife Act*, except
- (a) wildlife or controlled animals possessed by a person who is or was the holder of a zoo permit under the *Wildlife Act* relating to the wildlife or controlled animals,
  - (b) wildlife possessed by a person who is or was the holder of a game bird farm permit under the *Wildlife Act* relating to the wildlife,
  - (c) wildlife possessed by a person who is or was the holder of a temporary shelter permit under the *Wildlife Act* relating to the wildlife,
  - (d) fur-bearing animals held by a person who is or was the holder of a licence under the *Fur Farms Act* relating to the fur-bearing animals,
  - (e) wildlife or controlled animals possessed by a non-resident or non-resident alien who is or was the holder of an import permit under the *Wildlife Act* relating to the wildlife or controlled animals,

and

(f) wildlife processed at a meat facility.

- (2) For greater certainty, nothing in this Regulation affects the operation of any other law, including, without limitation,
- (a) any law that requires an approval, consent, permit, licence or other authorization or document to be obtained for an activity relating to the disposal of a dead animal, or
  - (b) any law that relates to a method of disposal, including without limitation, any law prohibiting or regulating the setting of fires.

## DISPOSAL OF DEAD ANIMALS

### Owner's duties

- 3(1) The owner of a dead animal shall dispose of the dead animal in accordance with this Regulation.
- (2) In storing or disposing of a dead animal, the owner of the dead animal shall ensure that
- (a) the odours generated by the dead animal are minimized,
  - (b) any run-on or run-off water at the site where the dead animal is located is minimized,
  - (c) the risk of the spread of disease is minimized, and
  - (d) the dead animal does not create a nuisance.
- (3) The owner of a dead animal shall dispose of the dead animal within 7 days unless the owner stores the dead animal
- (a) outside during winter months when the ambient temperature is low enough to keep the dead animal completely frozen,
  - (b) in a freezer unit, or
  - (c) in accordance with the directions of the chief provincial veterinarian, an inspector appointed under section 6(2) of the Act or a veterinary inspector appointed under the *Health of Animals Act* (Canada).
- (4) The owner of a dead animal shall comply with any direction of an inspector directing the owner to dispose of the dead animal.
- (5) The owner of an animal that is euthanized with drugs or other chemical substances shall take steps to prevent scavengers from gaining access to the animal beginning at the time the drugs or other chemical substances are administered until the final disposal of the dead animal.

### Disposal by meat facility

- 4 Subject to section 6 and the terms of any order made under section 18, an owner or operator of a meat facility shall dispose of a dead animal by a method
- (a) set out in section 7, 9(b), 10 or 13,
  - (b) referred to in section 15 that is approved for use by owners or operators of meat facilities under section 16, or

(c) authorized by the chief provincial veterinarian.

### Conditions respecting use of disposal methods

- 5 An owner of a dead animal shall not dispose of a dead animal using a method referred to in section 8, 9(a), 11 or 14 unless
- (a) the owner had custody or care and control of the animal immediately before the animal's death, and
  - (b) the owner is an owner of the land or premises

### Diseased animals

- 6(1) If a dead animal is known or suspected to have had a disease that is reportable under the Act but is not reportable under the *Health of Animals Act* (Canada), the owner of the dead animal shall dispose of the dead animal by a method provided for in this Regulation as directed by the chief provincial veterinarian or an inspector appointed under section 6(2) of the Act.
- (2) If a dead animal is known or suspected to have had a disease that is not reportable under the Act but is reportable under the *Health of Animals Act* (Canada), the owner of the dead animal shall dispose of the dead animal by a method provided for in this Regulation as directed by a veterinary inspector appointed under the *Health of Animals Act* (Canada).
- (3) If a dead animal is known or suspected to have had a disease that is reportable under the Act and under the *Health of Animals Act* (Canada), the owner of the dead animal shall dispose of the dead animal by a method provided for in this Regulation as directed by
- (a) the chief provincial veterinarian or an inspector appointed under section 6(2) of the Act, or
  - (b) a veterinary inspector appointed under the *Health of Animals Act* (Canada).

### Disposal in landfill

- 7 Subject to section 6 and the terms of any order made under section 18, a dead animal may be disposed of in a Class I or Class II landfill as defined in the Waste Control Regulation (AR 192/96).

### Burial

- 8(1) In this section, "provincial highway" means a provincial highway as defined in the *Highways Development and Protection Act*, but does not include a proposed highway.
- (2) Subject to section 6 and the terms of any order made under section 18, a dead animal may be buried in a farm burial pit in accordance with subsections (3) to (6).
- (3) A dead animal may be buried in a farm burial pit only if the bottom of the pit is at least one metre above the seasonal high-water table.
- (4) One or more dead animals may be buried in a farm burial pit if
- (a) the total weight of the dead animals buried in the pit does not exceed 2500 kg, and
  - (b) the pit

- (i) is at least 100 m from any well or other domestic water intake, stream, creek, pond, spring, river, irrigation canal, dugout or other water source and the high-water mark of any lake,
  - (ii) is at least 25 m from the edge of any coulee or embankment,
  - (iii) is at least 10 m from any other farm burial pit,
  - (iv) is at least 100 m from any residence,
  - (v) is at least 100 m from the boundary of any land owned or leased by a person other than the owner of the dead animal, unless the owner or leaseholder of the land has consented in writing to the pit being located closer to the boundary,
  - (vi) is at least 300 m from any provincial highway, and
  - (vii) is covered with
    - (A) a minimum of one metre of compacted soil, if no additional dead animals are to be buried in the pit, or
    - (B) a wooden or metal lid that is designed to exclude scavengers and quicklime is applied to the dead animal or animals in sufficient quantities to control flies and odour, if the weight limit established by clause (a) has not been reached and the owner intends to bury additional dead animals in the farm burial pit.
- (5) For the purposes of subsection (4)(a), the total weight of dead animals is determined by adding the weight at the time of burial of each dead animal buried in the pit to the weight at the time of burial of each dead animal previously buried in the pit.
- (6) One or more dead animals may be buried in a farm burial pit if
- (a) the total weight of the dead animals buried in the pit does not exceed 100 kg, and
  - (b) the pit
    - (i) is at least 50 m from any well or other domestic water intake, stream, creek, pond, spring, river, irrigation canal or other water source and the high-water mark of any lake,
    - (ii) is at least 25 m from the edge of any coulee or embankment,
    - (iii) is at least 100 m from any residence situated on land owned or leased by a person other than the owner of the dead animal,
    - (iv) is at least 3 m from any other farm burial pit,
    - (v) is covered with a minimum of one metre of compacted soil, and
    - (vi) has not been used for the burial of a dead animal during the previous 5-year period.
- (7) If authorized in writing by the chief provincial veterinarian or an inspector appointed under section 6(2) of the Act, one or more dead animals exceeding 2500 kg in total weight may be buried in a farm burial pit in accordance with any directions provided in the authorization.

## Burning

- 9 Subject to section 6 and the terms of any order made under section 18, a dead animal may be burned in accordance with the applicable provisions in the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* and in the regulations or codes of practice under that Act relating to the burning
- (a) in an open fire, or
  - (b) in an incinerator.

## Composting in compost facility

- 10 Subject to section 6 and the terms of any order made under section 18, a dead animal may be disposed of by composting in a Class I compost facility as defined in the Waste Control Regulation (AR 192/96).

## Farm composting

- 11(1) Subject to section 6, and the terms of any order made under section 18, a dead animal may be disposed of by composting
- (a) in an outdoor farm open compost pile
    - (i) that is
      - (A) at least 100 m from any well or other domestic water intake, stream, creek, pond, spring, river, irrigation canal, dugout or other water source and the high-water mark of any lake,
      - (B) at least 25 m from the edge of any coulee or embankment, and
      - (C) at least 100 m from any residence,
    - (ii) that is designed in a manner that will exclude scavengers,
    - (iii) that is at least 100 m from the boundary of any land owned or leased by a person other than the owner of the dead animal, unless the owner or leaseholder of the land has consented in writing to the outdoor farm open compost pile being located closer to the boundary,
    - (iv) that is at least 300 m from any provincial highway, and
    - (v) in which the dead animal or animals are covered with at least 60 cm of composting material,  
or
  - (b) in an indoor farm open compost pile that is located in a building that has
    - (i) an impervious floor, and
    - (ii) adequate drainage control to prevent the contamination of surface water or groundwater from the compost effluent.
- (2) Where one or more dead animals are composted in an outdoor or indoor farm open compost pile,
- (a) the volume of the dead animal or animals in the compost pile must not exceed 25% of the total volume of the compost pile, and

- (b) material may not be removed from the compost pile until the dead animal or animals are composted to the extent that
  - (i) the generation of odours by the compost is minimized,
  - (ii) the compost will not contaminate surface water or groundwater,
  - (iii) the compost will not attract vectors of disease, and
  - (iv) the use of the compost will not cause or contribute to the spread of disease, cause scavenging or create a nuisance.

### Food for other animals

**12(1)** Subject to section 6 and the terms of any order made under section 18, the owner of a dead animal may dispose of the dead animal by feeding it or allowing another person to feed it to an animal if the owner of the dead animal

- (a) knows that the dead animal
  - (i) did not have an infectious or contagious disease or a disease that is notifiable under the Act or reportable under the Act or the *Health of Animals Act* (Canada), and
  - (ii) was not euthanized with drugs or other chemical substances, and
- (b) provides a written certificate to the owner of the animal to which the dead animal is being fed confirming that the dead animal did not have a disease referred to in clause (a) and was not euthanized as referred to in clause (a), where the dead animal is being fed to an animal that is not owned by the owner of the dead animal.

**(2)** No person shall feed a dead animal to a production animal as defined in the Authorized Medicine Sales Regulation if the feeding of the dead animal to the production animal would contravene the *Health of Animals Act* (Canada) or the regulations under that Act.

### Rendering

**13** Subject to section 6 and the terms of any order made under section 18, a dead animal may be disposed of by rendering at a rendering plant operated under a permit issued under the *Health of Animals Act* (Canada).

### Natural disposal

**14(1)** In this section, “natural disposal”, in respect of a dead animal, means disposing of the dead animal in a manner that allows for scavenging.

- (2)** Subject to section 6 and the terms of any order made under section 18, a dead animal, other than inedible offal or condemned material, may be disposed of by natural disposal if
  - (a) the animal is not known or suspected to have had an infectious or contagious disease or a disease that is notifiable under the Act or reportable under the Act or the *Health of Animals Act* (Canada),

- (b) the dead animal was not euthanized with drugs or other chemical substances,
- (c) the total weight of the animals being disposed of at one site does not exceed 1000 kg,
- (d) there is a distance of at least 500 m between disposal sites, and
- (e) the dead animal is disposed of at a disposal site that
  - (i) is on property that is owned or leased by the owner of the dead animal and at least 100 m from the boundary of land owned or leased by a person other than the owner of the dead animal, unless the owner or leaseholder of the land has consented in writing to the disposal site being located closer to the boundary,
  - (ii) is at least 500 m from any well or other domestic water intake, stream, creek, pond, spring, river irrigation canal, dugout or other water source and the high-water mark of any lake,
  - (iii) is at least 25 m from the edge of any coulee or embankment,
  - (iv) is at least 400 m from any livestock facility, including a pasture, situated on land owned or leased by a person other than the owner of the dead animal,
  - (v) is at least 400 m from any residence,
  - (vi) is at least 400 m from any road, and
  - (vii) is at least 400 m from any
    - (A) park or recreation area as those terms are defined in the *Provincial Parks Act*,
    - (B) wilderness area, ecological reserve, natural area or heritage rangeland as those terms are defined in the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas and Heritage Rangelands Act*, or
    - (C) any other land intended for recreational use by the public.

### **Method approved by Minister**

- 15** Subject to section 6 and the terms of any order made under section 18, a dead animal may be disposed of in a manner that has been approved by the Minister under section 16 if any terms or conditions imposed under that section are complied with.

### **Approval of disposal methods**

- 16** The Minister may approve a method or methods for the disposal of dead animals in addition to the methods provided for under sections 7 to 14 and may, in the approval,
- (a) specify whether the method or methods are approved for use by owners or operators of meat facilities, and
  - (b) impose any terms or conditions on the disposal of dead animals using the method or methods that the Minister considers appropriate.

## Rendering plant

- 17** The owner or operator of a rendering plant shall ensure
- (a) that a dead animal rendered at the plant is subjected to such temperature and pressure as is necessary to render every portion of the carcass free from all viable pathogenic organisms, and
  - (b) that microbiological quality assurance processes are in place to prevent the occurrence of viable pathogenic organisms.

## Disaster or emergency

- 18(1)** In the event of a disaster or emergency, including, without limitation, a flood, fire or outbreak of disease, the chief provincial veterinarian may, for the purposes of responding to and dealing with the effects of the disaster or emergency, make an order
- (a) in respect of any person or class of persons that for the period set out in the order
    - (i) exempts the person or class of persons from the application of this Regulation or any provision of this Regulation, or
    - (ii) varies the rules applicable to a method for the disposal of dead animals set out in this Regulation in respect of dead animals disposed of or to be disposed of by the person or class of persons, or
  - (b) in respect of any owner or class of owner of a dead animal or type of dead animal specified in the order that directs the owner or class of owner to dispose of the dead animal or a dead animal of that type in a manner or by a method specified in the order.
- (2)** A person or owner who is the subject of an order or is a member of a class of persons or owners that is the subject of an order under subsection (1)(a)(ii) or (b) shall comply with the order.

## GENERAL

### Transport of non-rendered dead animal

- 19** A person who transports, or prepares for transport, a dead animal that has not been rendered shall ensure that the dead animal is transported or prepared for transport in such a manner so as to prevent
- (a) any dissemination of pathogenic organisms into the environment from the leakage of blood or other body fluids of the dead animal, and
  - (b) the contamination of food intended for consumption by humans or animals.

### Diagnosis of animal diseases

- 20** Nothing in this Regulation prohibits the collection, shipment or transport of a dead animal as may be required by a registered veterinarian or the owner of the dead animal for the diagnosis of animal disease.

## Offences

**21** A person who contravenes or fails to comply with this Regulation is guilty of an offence.

## Penalties

**22(1)** A person who is guilty of an offence under section 21(a) for a first offence, to a fine of not more than \$15 000 and, in the case of a continuing offence, to a further fine of not more than \$1000 for each day or part of a day during which the offence continues after the first day, and

(b) for a 2nd or subsequent offence,

(i) to a fine of not more than \$30 000 and, in the case of a continuing offence, to a further fine of not more than \$2000 for each day or part of a day during which the offence continues after the first day, or

(ii) to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or to both fines and imprisonment.

**(2)** A prosecution under subsection (1) may be commenced within 2 years of the commission of the alleged offence but not afterwards.

## Repeal

**23** The Destruction and Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation (AR 229/2000) is repealed.

## Expiry

**24** For the purpose of ensuring that this Regulation is reviewed for ongoing relevancy and necessity, with the option that it may be repassed in its present or an amended form following a review, this Regulation expires on September 30, 2023.

## Coming into force

**25** This Regulation comes into force on the coming into force of section 19 of the *Animal Health Amendment Act, 2009*.

# appendix B design worksheet

To assist you in determining yearly losses, sawdust requirements, number and size of bins, and windrow volume, refer to the following worksheets. Use the example worksheets as a guide for filling out your own.

## Large Animals Loss and Sawdust Calculations

### Mortality Material to be Handled

(a) Full grown animal losses

$$\frac{\text{# animals}}{\text{# animals}} * \frac{\text{lbs}}{\text{Avg. Wt.}} * \frac{\text{\% loss}}{\text{\% loss}} / 100 = \text{lbs loss/year}$$

(b) newborn losses (including still borns)

$$\frac{\text{animals born/year}}{\text{animals born/year}} * \frac{\text{lbs}}{\text{Avg. Wt.}} * \frac{\text{\% loss}}{\text{\% loss}} / 100 = \text{lbs loss/year}$$

(c) Young losses

$$\frac{\text{young animals/year}}{\text{young animals/year}} * \frac{\text{lbs}}{\text{Avg. Wt.}} * \frac{\text{\% loss}}{\text{\% loss}} / 100 = \text{lbs loss/year}$$

(d) Finisher losses

$$\frac{\text{animals finished /year}}{\text{animals finished /year}} * \frac{\text{lbs}}{\text{Avg. Wt.}} * \frac{\text{\% loss}}{\text{\% loss}} / 100 = \text{lbs loss/year}$$

$$\text{Total Mortality} = \text{lbs loss/year}$$

### Annual Sawdust Requirements

$$\frac{\text{lbs loss/yr}}{\text{lbs loss/yr}} * \frac{0.0037}{\text{conversion factor}} = \text{cu yards/year}$$

Up to 50% of the sawdust can be replaced by finished compost.

### Conversion

$$\frac{\text{cu yds/yr}}{\text{sawdust requirements}} * \frac{0.7645}{\text{conversion factor}} = \text{cu meters/year}$$

## EXAMPLE Large Animals Loss and Sawdust Calculations

### Mortality Material to be Handled

(a) Full grown animal losses

$$\frac{100}{\text{\# animals}} * \frac{590 \text{ lbs}}{\text{Avg. Wt.}} * \frac{3 / 100}{\% \text{ loss}} = \underline{1770} \text{ lbs loss/year}$$

(b) newborn losses (including still borns)

$$\frac{90}{\text{animals born/year}} * \frac{113 \text{ lbs}}{\text{Avg. Wt.}} * \frac{4.4 / 100}{\% \text{ loss}} = \underline{447} \text{ lbs loss/year}$$

(c) Young losses

$$\frac{\text{young animals/year}}{\text{young animals/year}} * \frac{\text{Avg. Wt.}}{\text{Avg. Wt.}} * \frac{\% \text{ loss}}{\% \text{ loss}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ lbs loss/year}$$

(d) Finisher losses

$$\frac{15}{\text{animals finished /year}} * \frac{333 \text{ lbs}}{\text{Avg. Wt.}} * \frac{\text{/100}}{\% \text{ loss}} = \underline{599.4} \text{ lbs loss/year}$$

$$\text{Total Mortality} = \underline{2816.9} \text{ lbs loss/year}$$

### Annual Sawdust Requirements

$$\frac{2816.9 \text{ lbs loss/yr.}}{\text{total death loss}} * \frac{0.0037}{\text{conversion factor}} = \underline{10.4} \text{ cu yards/year}$$

Up to 50% of the sawdust can be replaced by finished compost.

### Conversion

$$\frac{10.4 \text{ cu yards/year}}{\text{sawdust requirements}} * \frac{0.7645}{\text{conversion factor}} = \underline{8.0} \text{ cu meters/year}$$



# Bin Design and Selection for Large Animals

## Average Daily Mortality

$$\frac{\text{lbs/yr}}{\text{total mortality}} \div \frac{365}{\text{days/yr}} = \text{lbs loss/day}$$

## Bin Volumes

$$\text{Primary Bin Volume} = \frac{\text{lbs loss/day}}{\text{cu ft/lb of loss}} * 20 = \text{cubic feet}$$

$$\text{Secondary Bin Volume} = \text{Primary Bin Volume} = \text{cubic feet}$$

## Bin Wall Height

$$\text{Bin Wall Height} = \text{ft} \quad \text{Recommended 5 ft}$$

## Floor Areas

$$\text{Primary Bin Floor Area} = \frac{\text{cu ft}}{\text{primary bin volume}} \div \frac{\text{ft}}{\text{bin wall height}} = \text{sq ft}$$

$$\text{Secondary Bin Floor Area} = \text{Primary Bin Floor Area} = \text{sq ft}$$

## Select Bin Size

Typical Bin Dimensions:	10 ft x 10 ft	10 ft x 12 ft	10 ft x 14 ft	10 ft x 16 ft
		12 ft x 12 ft	12 ft x 14 ft	12 ft x 16 ft

The bin area you choose should fall between 100 and 200 square feet.

## Number of Primary Bins

$$\# \text{ of primary bins} = \frac{\text{sq ft}}{\text{primary bin floor size}} \div \frac{\text{sq ft}}{\text{bin size}} = \text{bins}$$

## Number of Secondary Bins

$$\# \text{ of secondary bins} = \# \text{ of primary bins} = \text{bins}$$

Be sure to round up to the next whole number.

Alternatively, 1 secondary bin can be used for every 2 primary bins if finished compost is utilized every 90 days (i.e. finished compost is not stored in bins).

## Total Number of Bins

$$\# \text{ bins} = \frac{\text{bins}}{\# \text{ of primary bins}} + \frac{\text{bins}}{\# \text{ of secondary bins}} + \frac{\text{bins}}{\# \text{ of additional bins}} = \text{bins}$$

Additional bins can be used for storage of finished compost, sawdust, etc.



# Windrow and Pad Sizing

## Windrow Height

Windrow Height = \_\_\_\_\_ ft

A tall windrow generally makes better use of the pad area and carbon material.  
(5 to 7 feet works best)

Producers using this design will load the carcasses while continually extending the length of the compost windrow.



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# for more information

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## Reportable Diseases

Office of the Chief Provincial Veterinarian

780-427-3448 or toll-free by first dialing 403-310-0000

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/cpv4264](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/cpv4264)

## Alberta's Notifiable and Reportable Diseases Website

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/afs12455](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/afs12455)

## CFIA

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/animae.shtml>





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