



10-Minute Supervisor Trainings

Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission

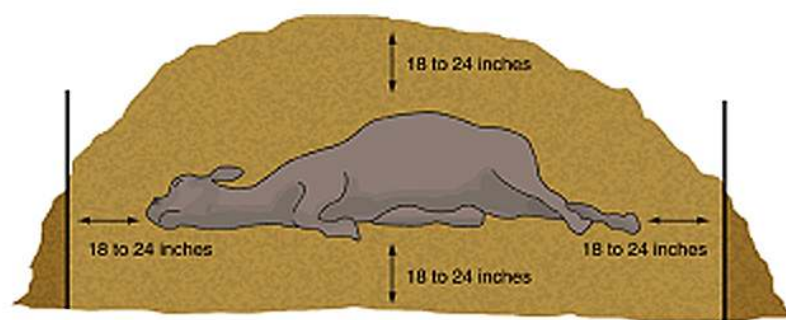
SEPTEMBER 2019

DEAD ANIMAL COMPOSTING

Inevitably, if you raise livestock at some point and time you will have to deal with the disposal of dead animal carcasses. There are several methods of disposing of carcasses legally, properly and environmentally safely by following Kentucky Revised Statute 257.160. One of those regulated methods is composting of fallen livestock in accordance with KAR 302 20:052. A composting system for livestock operations establishes a controlled environment for the natural decomposition of the carcass into a matter that can be used to address needs elsewhere on the farm. Guidance and specifications developed by University of Kentucky College of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service recommend particular attention be paid to site location as to not create a water quality issue along with proper and timely management of the compost pile in accordance with a landowners Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Plan and Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP). <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/age/pubs/id/id166/id166.pdf>

A composting system developed on a landowners' farm and not used for commercial purposes has specific requirements and benefits. A system constructed on private land does not require a permit, allows for disposal on site in timely and environmentally safe manner, nutrient matter is produced that may be applied to crops or fields according to a CNMP, KY nutrient management plan and Ag Water Quality plan. The system also reduces the reliance on an outside vendor or source for removal and disposal. The Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality cost share program provides possible cost share assistance of up to \$7,500.00 of eligible reimbursement to install or purchase an animal mortality composting system consisting of either a bin type system or rotary drum depending on the type of livestock your operation produces. Landowners seeking cost share assistance under both the state and federal programs will require adhering to specific guidance provided by NRCS technical team and in accordance with a current Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP). Landowners must have on hand a current CNMP before an application for cost assistance for the composting system is made.

There are several types of compost systems: stack pad, bin, windrow, vessel and rotary drum compost systems. The stack pad, bin and windrow systems work well to accommodate large animal composition of cattle equine, hogs etc., while the rotary drum or vessel system are often utilized in conjunction with the poultry industry. Both methods when utilized and managed properly provide legal and effective means of disposing of the fallen livestock. Facility sizing is based on the normal mortality loss records kept for the operation. If that data is not available then the use of locally established rates for that particular type of operation may be utilized. Specific instructions and guidance on purpose, permits, location, storage, size and type of system are provided in NRCS practice standard 316 Animal Mortality Facility at <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/>. Once the composting system is installed and with proper management, break down of the carcasses usually have little to no problems with odors, varmints, seepage, or other environmental concerns.



Some countywide carcass composting systems have been established and are available to address proper disposal through local partnership efforts. Local conservation districts have developed partnerships with county governments who usually have the land, equipment and personnel to manage the system. Conservation districts assist administratively and with acquiring possible funds through environmental grants available through the Kentucky state cost share program or from the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy Dead Animal Removal Program. County commercial systems must adhere to specifics that include registration of the facility, permitting and usage requirements that differ from that of individual landowner composting system (KAR 302 20:052). The long-term objective is that the local usage fees would sufficiently fund the project once the initial construction and start-up costs are met. Additional information and guidance is available in publications from University of Kentucky Department of Agriculture publication 167 *On-Farm Disposal of Animal Mortalities*. This publication has specifics to location, materials for construction, monitoring, bulking agent materials, temperature recommendation, moisture content and equipment requirements. You may also contact the Kentucky state veterinarian at online at <http://www.kyagr.com/statevet/index.htm> or by phone at (502) 564-3956 for additional guidance. Washington and Franklin counties have county-wide compost facility and if a district would want to schedule a site visit or get additional information on those types of system contact the Washington County Conservation District at (859) 336-7777 or Franklin County Conservation District at (502) 352-2701.