

PA Livestock Mortality Management

What Changed?

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
Penn State Cooperative Extension

J. Craig Williams, Dr. Greg Martin,
Dr. Elizabeth Santini, DVM
Dr. John Roberts, DVM

Legal Options for Disposal of Dead Animals in PA

- ☀ Rendering
- ☀ Incineration
- ☀ Burial
- ☀ Composting



Within 48 hours of Death

Rendering

- ☀ Fee for disposal
- ☀ Not for infectious or contaminated carcasses
- ☀ Fee for large animals can average \$40-\$60 per animal
 - Higher fees with distance, gas surcharges
 - Limited availability in some areas
- ☀ Acceptable and safe means of disposing many large animals
 - Portions of animal are recycled into useable products

Rendering challenges, 2009

- ☀ BSE and Specific Risk Materials (SRM)
- ☀ 1997 Ban on Ruminant Proteins in feed
- ☀ 2004-2007 BSE samples and supported testing at Render's
- ☀ New Federal regulations for Bovine rendering to take effect on April 2009
 - Render's are to remove more SRM's than just the brain and the spinal cord.

Other Means of Disposal

- ☀ Incineration
 - Some large poultry and swine operations have units
 - Animal Diagnostic Lab at Penn State
 - State Veterinary Lab at Harrisburg
 - Expensive to run
 - Effective but can handle limited quantities
- ☀ Tissue digester being installed at New Bolton Center
 - Extreme alkaline process destroys carcass and prions
 - Up-front cost for equipment and building very high
 - Very effective and relatively cheap once installed

Other Means of Disposal

- ☀ Licensed landfills
 - Make arrangements with owner ahead of time- must be a licensed and lined facility
 - Transportation, PDA Dead animal license
 - Safety issues in transportation
 - Rapid burial upon arrival
 - Decontamination of trucks and equipment

Other Means of Disposal

☀ Burial

- 200 feet from water sources
- 6 feet down and 2 feet above bed rock
- Not near any sink holes or wet areas
- Do not use lime

☀ Cheap

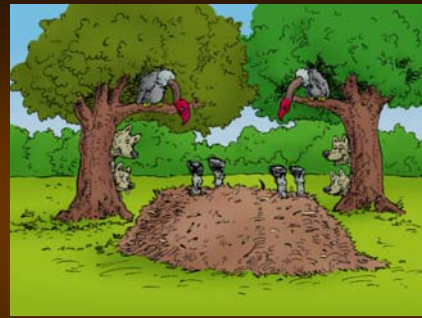
- Not very practical for large numbers
- Hard to find a truly suitable location



Other Means of Disposal

☀ Compost

- 200 feet from water sources
- Not near any sink holes or wet areas
- 2 feet of Carbon source below carcass and completely covering on all sides
- Large cattle will take 6 months while calves will be 3 months
- Carbon source can be used again for another pile in 6-12 months



Reminder: The feeding of coyotes and buzzards is *not* a legal option for carcass disposal.

Why not just dump that carcass on the back 40?

- ☀ Spread of infectious diseases and possible poisoning of wildlife
- ☀ Attracts scavengers to your property and livestock
- ☀ Soil, water, and air contamination
- ☀ Waste of valuable resources



Why not just dump it on the back 40?



- ☀ A visit from your state veterinarian after a call from the neighbors . . .

More information:

☀ PSU Composting web site

- <http://Composting.cas.psu.edu>

- You can link to the PSU Natural Rendering and composting factsheet
- PDA Ombudsman program handout
"Livestock & Poultry Mortality Disposal in Pennsylvania"
 - This Handout was mailed in the Lancaster Farming issue Late December.