



Title: Mortality Disposal Alternative

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Organization: Texas Cooperative Extension

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Theme: Animal Waste Management

Situation: Composting has long been a waste management tool for dealing with manure from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO). Composting has also been used to dispose of poultry and small animal carcasses, but is quickly being seen as an optional method for disposing of large animal carcasses as well, specifically beef cattle. As the cost of dealing with mortalities and environmental concerns increase, the CAFOs use and/or acceptance of mortality composting could very easily make it a preferred method of handling livestock losses.

Objectives: This demonstration covers the basics requirements of composting carcasses as well as some of the finer details that can either insure a successful, low-odor, composting program or create a high-odor source of complaints.

Methods: Using the very simple basics behind composting, cattle carcasses are placed into a static pile of horse/cattle manure along with a sufficient carbon source (hay, woodchips, etc.) and then placed inside a three-wall composting bin. By managing the composting process for 2-3 months, the carcass can be converted from a disposal problem to a stable biomass source of nutrients and organic matter with little or no environmental concerns if done properly.

Partnerships: Texas Agricultural Experiment Station; Texas Cooperative Extension; Dept of Biological and Agricultural Engineering

Research: Carcass composting has been presented at farm shows, dairy outreach programs, ASAE international conference, and graduate level college courses.

Results: Carcasses were converted from a disposal problem to a stable biomass that is then land applied. Composting creates an alternative to burial, incineration, or rendering.



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