

Dead Animal Disposal

Kentucky has nearly 3 million cattle, swine, and sheep in the state. In addition, there are approximately 2.1 million cats and dogs in Kentucky. With high numbers of animals and a mortality rate of 3 to 5 percent, disposal of animal carcasses can be cause for concern.

Improper disposal of animal carcasses can contaminate drinking water sources or spread disease. Kentucky state law provides guidance for animal carcass disposal in effort to protect Kentucky's water resources and its citizens.

Dead animals should be disposed of within 48 hours of death and in accordance with Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act Livestock BMP #15. Approved methods for the disposal of animal carcasses include:

- Incineration;
- Boiling or steaming above boiling temperatures for two (2) hours or more;
- Burying, with restrictions;
 - Do not bury carcasses in flood plain.
 - Do not bury carcasses within one hundred (100) feet of streams, sinkholes, wells, springs, lakes, public highways, residences, or stables.
 - Bury in a hole at least four (4) feet deep.
 - Cut open the abdominal and thoracic cavities along length of carcass.
 - Cover with two (2) inches of quicklime and at least three (3) feet of soil.
- Removal by duly licensed rendering establishment;
- Deposition in a contained landfill approved under KRS Chapter 224;
- Composting according to 302 KAR 20:052 or KRS Chapter 224; or
- Any combination of the above or any other scientifically-proven method approved by the Board of Agriculture.

Section 3 of 302 KAR 20:052 states that only facilities permitted by the State Veterinarian can legally compost dead animals. These permitted facilities must be constructed to meet or exceed the current United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Practice Standard for Composting Facility, Code 317, in Section IV of the Kentucky Field Office Technical Guide and must meet the requirements of the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Plan.

Dead animals must be transported according to state law. Animal carcasses must be transported in a covered vehicle, the bed or tank must be constructed so that no drippings or seepings from the carcass can escape from the vehicle. Animals that are suspected to have died of a highly contagious, infectious, or communicable disease should not be transported except by specific methods approved by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

Dead animal disposal programs vary from county to county. The following is a list of resources available for dead animal disposal assistance:

Sources of Assistance for Dead Animal Disposal

Kentucky Department of Agriculture

- Office of State Veterinarian, Frankfort 502-564-3956
- Animal Removal Assistance Program 502-564-4983

Conservation District

- Office located in county or district, check local telephone listings

Division of Conservation

- Office of the Director, Frankfort 502-564-3080

References

Kentucky Administrative Regulations. *302 KAR 20:052 Animal Carcass Composting*.
<<http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/kar/302/020/052.htm>> Accessed February 25, 2004.

Kentucky Revised Statutes. *KRS 224:71-100 through 224: 71-140 Agriculture Water Quality Plans*.
<<http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/krs/224%2D71/120.pdf>> Accessed February 25, 2004.

Kentucky Department of Agriculture. *2003 Kentucky Agricultural Emergency Plan booklet*.
Frankfort, KY.

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