

Methods of Carcass Disposal

Rendering

The easiest way to dispose of carcasses, especially those of farm animals. Rendering is a process whereby the carcass is cooked at high temperatures and converted into animal feed or fertilizer. Commercial companies perform this service and may, for a fee, pick up the animals. This method can be used if normal transportation methods and utilities are functional and the rendering company has sufficient trucks and personnel to handle the volume.

Burning

Can be done outside or by using commercial incinerators. Many animal hospitals, humane societies, and diagnostic laboratories have incinerators given that prior agreements are in place. When burning carcasses outside, it is important to let appropriate governmental officials know ahead of time to assure that no ordinances or laws are broken.

Burial

Can be done only where local ordinances and the terrain permit. The location selected should be approved in advance by the appropriate environmental government agency. Burial may only be permitted at certain locations. Arrangements may also have to be made for heavy equipment to move animals and dig the graves. A good resource for these supplies is the State transportation department and National Guard.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service “Foot and Mouth Disease Emergency Disease Guidelines” and “Hog Cholera Emergency Disease Guidelines” can be consulted for procedures for preparing the outside burn site, burning and burial.

Composting

Used to dispose of large numbers of poultry carcasses. Composting is the mixing by volume of 1 part carcass to 2 parts litter and 1 part straw in alternate layers in a boxed, enclosed area. The method can also be used for larger animals. Whereas poultry can be placed whole in layers, larger animals need to be cut or ground into smaller parts first. The composting is accomplished by the bacteria in the litter and takes about two weeks to complete. The completed compost pile is odorless and can be used for fertilizer. Details of this procedure can be obtained from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

Fermentation

Carcasses are mixed with fermentable sugar in a metal container. Bacteria from the digestive tract of the carcasses ferment the material. The finished product can then be used for animal feed. Details of this procedure can also be obtained from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.