

# COMPOSTING ANIMAL CARCASSES IN MISSOURI

## *Proper Methods*



**Composting of animal carcasses, when done correctly, is a safe way to dispose of carcasses with limited threat to ground water contamination. The following steps identify the correct way to compost animal carcasses.**

1

## **SITE SELECTION**

Choose an area that is flat or an area with a slight slope. Do not choose an area that is prone to flooding or a location where rain runoff could flow into the compost pile. The site selected must meet environmental setback requirements, which are the required distances a compost pile must be from wells, ponds, streams, etc.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SETBACKS**

| Type of Sensitive Setback Area                                 | Distance from Compost Pile                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wells, abandoned wells, sinkholes, caves and losing streams    | 300 ft.                                                     |
| Permanently flowing and intermittent streams                   | 100 ft. - 300 ft. recommended (no area subject to flooding) |
| Privately owned impoundment (ponds) not used as a water supply | 100 ft.                                                     |
| Property lines                                                 | 50 ft.                                                      |
| Neighboring houses or public use areas                         | 150 ft.<br>(recommended 300 ft. for composting and burial)  |



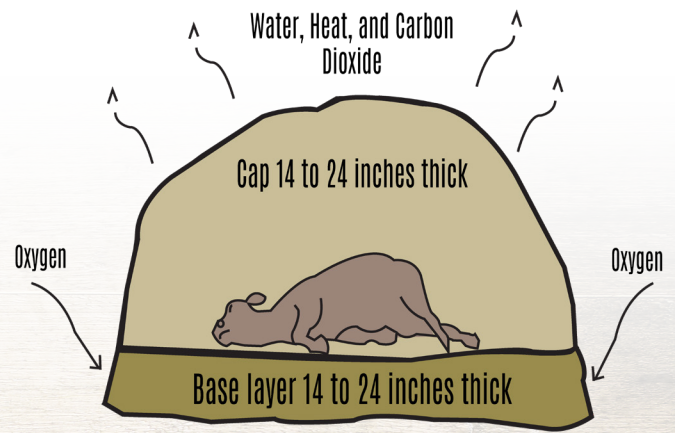


## 2

## BUILD COMPOST BASE LAYER

The purpose of the base material is to absorb any liquids that may leak during decomposition, but still allow for oxygen to flow into the bottom of the compost pile. The compost base layer should be between 14 and 24 inches thick. The specific measurement depends on the size of the carcass being composted. A larger carcass requires a thicker base layer. Material suitable for carbon include:

- Course sawdust
- Mulch
- 50/50 mixture of hay and sawdust
- 50/50 mixture of straw and sawdust



## 3

## CARCASS PLACEMENT

Place the animal carcass on top of the base layer. The base layer should be wide enough to display at least two feet of excess space around the animal carcass once it is placed. The abdominal cavity of carcasses over 150 pounds should be punctured to allow escape of putrefactive gasses.

## 4

## COVER CARCASS

Cover the animal carcass with at least 14 to 24 inches of carbon cover material. Larger animal carcasses will require 18 to 24 inches of cover carbon. Material suitable for carbon include:

- Course sawdust
- Mulch
- 50/50 mixture of hay and sawdust
- 50/50 mixture of straw and sawdust

## 5

## COMPOST MONITORING

Monitor the compost pile daily for two weeks after construction. There should be no odor or insect attraction. If either occur, add four to eight more inches of cover carbon. If a scavenger removes coverage from the compost pile, add more carbon to the exposed area. The compost pile should “sink in” as the animal carcass decomposes.

## 6

## TURNING COMPOST PILE

Turn the compost pile after a minimum of 21 days (35 to 40 days for larger carcasses) to mix the compost material. Turning and mixing the compost pile will cause the pile to have a second heat cycle, which will further decompose the animal carcass. If there is still animal flesh visible when turning the pile, cover the compost pile with at least four to eight inches of new carbon cover material.