

Managing Livestock Mortalities

Remember to document losses with dated photos prior to disposal.

- Rendering, incineration, burial, composting and landfiling are all approved methods of carcass disposal. Burning is also an approved method in certain situations, but should be used as a method of last resort.

Carcass disposal publication: <https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/publications/animal-carcass-disposal-options-rendering-incineration-burial-composting>

Carcass disposal

video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5HYM4gobWo&list=PLnn8HanJ32l60GFBXaOQx2FO6g3afjpO7&index=1>

Burial, composting and landfiling may be the easiest options for carcass disposal.

- Burial
 - If burial is going to be used, be sure carcasses are placed 4 feet above the water table with 4 feet of cover. If possible, bury livestock in clay soils.
- Composting
 - Composting video: <https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/publications/4-easy-steps-composting-dead-livestock>
 - Composting is an above ground burial process that uses resources already on your operation.
 - The materials you will need include:
 - Base material: straw, old hay, coarse crop residues (corn stalks), sunflower hulls
 - Bulking material: manure or spoiled fermented feedstuffs
 - Cover material: straw, old hay, sawdust
 - To compost:
 - Step 1: Place 2 feet of base material in pile or long row, depending on the number of dead livestock to be composted.
 - Step 2: Lay dead livestock on top of base. Have at least 1 foot of base material between perimeter of dead livestock and edge of base.
 - Step 3: Cover dead livestock with 8 to 10 inches of bulking material.
 - Step 4: Cover the entire pile or long row with 2 feet of cover material.

- Things to remember:
 - Small-sized dead livestock (livestock you can lift by hand) can be layered next to or stacked on top of one another, given there is bulking material between them so they are not touching.
 - If composting ruminants, puncture the rumen to prevent it from exploding.
 - Make sure pile always has sufficient cover material to keep bulking material and dead livestock covered.
 - Aerate the compost every six months from early spring to late fall. To accelerate composting, aerate it every two months from early spring to late fall.
 - Existing compost can be used to cover new piles or long rows.
- Landfilling
 - Dispose of carcasses at an approved municipal solid waste landfill. Search “DEQ ND municipal solid waste landfills” to find an approved landfill. Contact the landfill to determine disposal protocols. <https://deq.nd.gov/foia/SolidWaste/ActiveSWLandfillsMSWLF.aspx>
 - If there are questions about where to dispose of carcasses, contact the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality here: <https://deq.nd.gov/Contactus.aspx>