



Steven W. Troxler  
Commissioner

North Carolina Department of Agriculture  
and Consumer Services  
*Veterinary Division*

David T. Marshall, DVM  
State Veterinarian

**Policy on Alternative Composting Methods  
For Carcass Disposal following an Emergency Event  
Office of the State Veterinarian  
March 27, 2009**

Alternative open composting of large numbers of carcasses following an emergency mortality event may be allowed if permitted by the State Veterinarian's office. Permission for windrow or static pile composting may be allowed under the following conditions:

1. Open composting must be conducted in accordance with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Practice Standard Code 316; Animal Mortality Facility (attached) and also available at <http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/NC/nc316-nov2005.pdf>.
2. A suitable site is chosen for the composting that meets all federal, state and local rules and regulations for buffering the site from streams, lakes, wetlands, property lines and other features. The site must be no closer than 100 feet from wells, springs or water courses, and a minimum of 300 feet from neighboring residences. It must be 100 feet from all property lines. Considering the prevailing winds in the area, the site should be located downwind from populated areas. It should not be located within a 100 year floodplain. In addition, it should be located on a well drained site. It is recommended that the owner should work with NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) or the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to preselect a site that would be suitable in the event of catastrophic mortality. Available space should allow an area 30 feet wide, variable in length and including a staging area for equipment.
2. If open composting is permitted by the State Veterinarian's office, the compost product must be spread on the owner's property or property associated with the owner's farming operations.
3. The windrow or pile must be constructed in such a way as to control excessive odors and prevent rodent, vermin or insect activity. The pile or windrow should be capped with at least a 2 foot layer of wood chips, sawdust or other carbon source and have an 18 inch to 2 foot base of similar material.

4. A long-stemmed probe thermometer must be used to monitor temperature of the compost pile or windrow. Temperatures should reach 131 degrees F within 5 days and remain at least 131 degrees F for five consecutive days. A log of temperatures recorded daily during the composting process must be kept and made available upon request.
5. At the discretion of the State Veterinarian (SV), testing of the compost product for certain pathogens may be required, especially if the cause of the high mortality is disease related.
6. The composting process is subject to oversight by NCDA&CS personnel.
7. No ruminant material may be disposed of by this method in the state of North Carolina.
8. To obtain permission for open composting in piles or windrows, contact the State Veterinarian's office at 919-733-7601 during office hours, 8 AM till 5 PM Monday through Friday. Outside normal office hours contact the same number and you will be referred to NC Emergency Management. Please notify Emergency Management that you have an emergency mortality and need to speak to the SV's office to obtain a permit for disposal.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David T. Marshall, DVM". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

David T. Marshall, DVM  
State Veterinarian