

Name of Practice: COMPOSTER FACILITIES
VACS Program Specifications for No. WP-4C

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program's Composting Facilities best management practice which are applicable to all contracts entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

This practice creates a planned system designed to manage the treatment and disposal of poultry, small ruminant and swine carcasses resulting from normal mortality and to improve water quality by composting those carcasses and spreading the composted material at the proper time, rate, and location.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. This practice is designed to provide facilities for composting poultry, small ruminant and swine carcasses from normal mortality, storage of raw materials necessary for composting, storage of the composted end product, and the recycling of composted carcasses by land applying the end product in a manner that will abate pollution that would otherwise result from existing disposal methods for normal mortality carcasses.
2. All applicants must have:
 - i. A written operation and management plan for each composting structure.
 - ii. A Nutrient Management Plan developed in accordance with requirements for Nutrient Management Plan content and procedures as stipulated in the Virginia Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations for land application of the composted end product and other animal wastes. The Nutrient Management Plan shall be implemented and maintained for the life of the practice.
 - iii. A manure test for the composted end product for nutrient analysis and, if applicable, a separate test for any other land applied animal wastes (once during the first twelve months of operation of the structure).
 - iv. A thermometer of suitable design, which will permit temperature monitoring through the depth of the composting material within a bin or cell. During the composting process, temperatures must be achieved that are adequate to kill known pathogens.
 - v. For composting swine mortality, one of the following high-carbon bulking agents for mortality coverage must be used:
 - a. Sawdust or fine wood chips obtained from a sawmill or other wood processing facility.
 - b. Ginning trash obtained from cotton gins.
 - c. Chopped straw or chopped cornstalks.

- d. Other organic materials, as recommended by technical composting publications, including Virginia Cooperative Extension “Composting for Mortality Disposal on Hog Farms” publication 414-020 (Virginia Tech., 2003); Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service “Disposal of Swine Carcasses in Arkansas” publication MP392 (Univ. of Arkansas, 1997); Missouri Cooperative Extension Service “Composting Dead Swine” publication WQ225 (Univ. of Missouri, 1994).
3. Expenses are authorized:
 - i. For composting facilities that will contribute significantly to maintaining or improving soil or water quality.
 - ii. For constructed composting facilities, which are free standing or attached to a dry waste stacking facility. Constructed composting facilities may also be housed within dry waste stacking facilities when housing the composting facilities does not interfere with the waste storage and management of stacking facilities.
 - iii. For prefabricated composting including drum composting facilities or poultry mortality freezers. Cost-share payment and tax credit shall be based on the least costly technically feasible option.
 - iv. For leveling and filling to permit the installation of an effective system.
 - v. For concrete construction necessary for the structure's foundation and a minimal work area needed for equipment used to load, mix, and unload the compost and bulking materials into or from the composting facilities.
4. Expenses are not authorized:
 - i. For thermometers.
 - ii. For composting facilities that do not meet local and state regulations.
 - iii. For planned facilities. An existing water quality problem must be apparent to be eligible for funds.
 - iv. For planned enlargement of livestock operations. However, cost-share funds are available for use to solve existing problems.
 - v. For the acquisition of approved bulking agents.
5. In order to be eligible for cost-share or tax credit, producers must be fully implementing a current Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) on all agricultural production acreage contained within the field upon which this practice will be implemented. The NMP must comply with all requirements set forth in the Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations (4VAC50-85 et seq.) and the Virginia Nutrient Management Standards and Criteria (revised July 2014); must be prepared and certified by a Virginia certified Nutrient Management Planner; and must be on file with the local District before any cost-share payment is made to the participant. Plans shall also contain any specific production management criteria designated in the BMP practice (4VACV50-85-130G).

6. All appropriate local and state permits must be obtained before cost-share payments are authorized.
7. This practice is subject to NRCS Standards 313 Waste Storage Facility, 316 Animal Mortality Facility, 317 Composting Facility, 362 Diversion, 367 Roofs and Covers, 558 Roof Runoff Structure, 561 Heavy Use Area, 620 Underground Outlet, 633 Waste Recycling, and 634 Waste Transfer.
8. All practice components implemented must be maintained for a minimum of 15 years following the calendar year of installation. The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the year of certification of completion. By accepting either a cost-share payment or a state tax credit for this practice, the participant agrees to maintain all practice components for the specified lifespan. This practice is subject to spot check by the District throughout the lifespan of the practice and failure to maintain the practice may result in reimbursement of cost-share and/or tax credits.

C. Rate(s)

1. The VACS payment will not exceed 75% of the approved estimated cost or eligible actual cost, whichever is less, of poultry, small ruminant and swine composting facilities only.
2. As set forth by Virginia Code, the Commonwealth currently provides a tax credit for implementation of certain agricultural best management practices as discussed in the Tax Credit Guidelines of the Manual.
3. If a participant receives cost-share, only the percent of the total cost of the project that the participant contributed is used to determine the tax credit.

D. Technical Responsibility

Technical and administrative responsibility is assigned to qualified technical DCR and District staff in consultation, where appropriate and based on the controlling standard, with DCR, Virginia Certified Nutrient Management Planner(s), NRCS, DOF, and VCE. Individuals certifying technical need and technical practice installation shall have appropriate certifications as identified above and/or Engineering Job Approval Authority (EJAA) for the designed and installed component(s). All practices are subject to spot check procedures and any other quality control measures.

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