

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

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program's Voluntary 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 treatment and disposal of poultry and swine carcasses resulting from normal mortality to improve water quality by composting 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 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 poultry and swine mortality carcasses.

All applicants must have:

- i. A written operation and management plan for each composting structure.
- ii. Producers must be fully implementing a current Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) on all agricultural production acreage under the producer's control receiving manure from the associated storage structure. 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. Plans shall also contain any specific production management criteria designated in the BMP practice (4VACV50-85-130G).
- 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 permits 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).
2. This practice may include:
 - i. 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.
 - ii. Prefabricated composting facilities, including drum composting facilities.
 3. All appropriate local and state permits must be obtained before cost-share payments are authorized.
 4. The practice must not be in lifespan from any other conservation program.
 5. This practice is subject to NRCS Standards 313 Waste Storage Facility, 316 Animal Mortality Facility, 362 Diversion, 367 Roofs and Covers, 382 Fence, 558 Roof Runoff Structure, 561 Heavy Use Area, 620 Underground Outlet, 633 Waste Recycling, and 634 Waste Transfer.
 6. All practice components implemented should be maintained for a minimum of five years following the calendar year of installation. This practice is subject to spot check by the District throughout the lifespan of the practice.

C. 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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