



State of Oklahoma  
Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry

Mary Fallin  
Governor

Jim Reese  
Secretary of Agriculture

**CARCASS DISPOSAL OPTIONS**

1. **RENDERING**

2. **LANDFILLS**

See landfill list enclosed.

3. **BURIAL** – (See attached State Statutes & Rules and Applicable NRCS Fact Sheet addressing this method)

The general carcass burial disposal guidelines follow:

- a. Burial of dead livestock requires the construction of a pit.
- b. Do not locate the burial pit closer than one foot (1') vertically above the flood plain, or within two feet (2') of the water table or bedrock.
- c. Do not locate the burial pit within three hundred feet (300') of wells, waters of the state, neighboring residences, public areas, or property lines.
- d. After placing the deads in the trench, cover the deads with a minimum of two and a half feet (2 ½') of topsoil. Inspect burial sites routinely to ensure that wild animals are not digging and dragging deads away.
- e. Also, refer to the Criminal Code of the Oklahoma Statutes (enclosed).

4. **INCINERATION**

Open-air incineration of carcasses is not allowed, unless the animal died of any contagious or infectious disease. Self-contained, closed incinerators and air curtain incinerators are allowed.

5. **COMPOSTING**

Please note that licensed Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations and Registered Poultry Feeding Operations must receive permission from the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry (ODAFF), Agricultural Environmental Management Services (AEMS) Division (405/522-4659) prior to composting or burial (only exception is if AWMP allows for composting).

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## **CARCASS DISPOSAL**

This Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry (ODAFF), Agricultural Environmental Management Services (AEMS) Division's booklet describes animal and poultry carcass disposal options and requirements. Contents include: Title 2 § 2-18.1 – Oklahoma Criminal Statutes; portions of the Oklahoma Agriculture Codes and Rules; recommendations and guidelines from USDA NRCS pamphlets and codes, other state's carcass disposal practices and recognized, published scientific documents.

## **OKLAHOMA STATUTES** **TITLE 21 CRIMES AND PUNISHMENTS**

### **Section 1222 – Duty to Dispose of Domestic Animals Dying of a Contagious or Infectious**

It shall be the duty of the owner of any domestic animal in the State of Oklahoma, which may hereafter die of any contagious or infectious disease, either to burn the carcass thereof or bury the same within twenty-four (24) hours after he has notice or knowledge of such fact so that no part of such carcass shall be nearer than two and one-half (2 ½) feet of the surface of the soil: provided, That all hogs dying of any disease shall be burned. It shall further be unlawful to bury any such carcass as mentioned in this section in any land along any stream or ravine, where it is liable to become exposed through erosion of the soil, or where such land is any time subject to overflow. "Owner", as used in this section, shall mean and include any person having domestic animals in his possession, either by reason of ownership, rent, hire, loan, or otherwise, and shall be subject to all the pains and penalties of this article.

### **Section 1223 – Leaving Carcass in Certain Places**

It shall be unlawful for any person to leave or deposit, or cause to be deposited or left the carcass of any animals, chicken or other fowl, whether the same shall have died from disease or otherwise, in any well, spring, pond or stream of water; or leave or deposit the same within one-fourth (1/4) mile of any occupied dwelling or of any public highway, without burying the same as provided in the preceding section of this act.

### **Section 1224 – Penalty**

Every person who violates the two preceding sections, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

## **Oklahoma Statutes Citationized**

- Title 2. Agriculture
  - > Chapter 1 – Agriculture Code
    - ⇒ Article Article 2 – State Board of Agriculture
      - \* Section 2-18.1 – Pollution of Air, Land, or Waters Unlawful – Powers of Board – Orders, Penalties
  
- A. It shall be unlawful and a violation of the Oklahoma Agricultural Code for any person to cause pollution of any air, land or waters of the state by persons which are subject to the jurisdiction of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry pursuant to the Oklahoma Environmental Quality Act.
- B. If the State Board of Agriculture finds that any of the air, land, or waters of the state which are subject to the jurisdiction of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry pursuant to the Oklahoma Environmental Quality Act have been or are being polluted, the Board shall make an order requiring that the pollution cease within a time period determined by the Department, or require a manner of treatment or of disposition of the water or other polluting material as may in the judgment of the Board be necessary to prevent further pollution. In addition, the Board may assess an administrative penalty pursuant to Section 2-18 of this title. The person to whom the order is directed shall fully comply with the order of the Board and pay any fine and costs assessed.
- C. 1. Manure shall not be defined as or be considered a hazardous substance or hazardous waste as those terms are defined by state law.  
2. For purposes of this subsection, “manure” means any feces, urine, urea, or other excrement from livestock and shall also only include:
  - a) associated nonhazardous bedding, compost, raw materials, or other nonhazardous materials commingled with the excrement,
  - b) nonhazardous process water associated with the excrement or materials, or
  - c) nonhazardous byproducts, constituents, or substances contained in or originating from the excrement, materials, or process water.
- 3. This subsection shall not be construed to affect or limit the applicability of any other provision of the Oklahoma Agriculture Code.

## ❖ Oklahoma Statutes Citationized

- Title 27A. Environment and Natural Resources
  - > Chapter 1 – Oklahoma Environmental Quality Act
    - ⇒ Article Article 1 – Environmental Agencies
      - \* Section 1-1-201 – Definitions

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10. “Pollution” means the presence in the environment of any substance, contaminant or pollutant, or any other alteration of the physical, chemical or biological properties of the environment or the release of any liquid, gaseous or solid substance into the environment in quantities which are or will likely create a nuisance or which render or will likely render the environment harmful or detrimental or injurious to public health, safety or welfare, or to domestic, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, or other legitimate beneficial uses, or to livestock, wild animals, birds, fish or other aquatic life, or to property.

**NOTE – Interpretation:** No animal or poultry carcasses are allow to lay in air, land, or waters of the state and naturally decompose. Carcasses should be properly disposed of by one of the methods listed on the front page of this document.

**Oklahoma Criminal Statutes**  
**Title 21 O.S. §1222, 1223, 1224**

**Oklahoma's criminal statutes require the following:**

- It shall be unlawful to bury any carcass in any land along any stream or ravine, where it is liable to become exposed through erosion of the soil, or where land is any time subject to overflow.**
- It shall be unlawful for any person to leave or deposit the carcass of any animal, chicken or other fowl, whether it shall have died from disease or otherwise, in any well, spring, pond or stream of water; or leave or deposit the same within one-fourth (1/4) mile of any occupied dwelling or of any public highway, without burying.**
- Every person who violates the two preceding sections, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.**

Landowner \_\_\_\_\_

## Handling Catastrophic Animal Losses (Burial Method)

### DEALING WITH CATASTROPHIC LOSSES

Mortality is a normal part of animal operations. Normal mortality should be addressed with composters or other appropriate carcass disposal methods. *This job sheet addresses only catastrophic losses due to natural events. Catastrophic losses due to disease must be reported to the State Veterinarian and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).* For assistance in dealing with normal mortality, contact your local NRCS or Conservation District office.

### BEFORE DISPOSAL BEGINS

Proper disposal of carcasses is important to prevent livestock disease transmission and to protect air and water quality. The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry (ODAFF) requires licensed confined animal feeding operations (CAFO's) and registered poultry feeding operations to have plans for handling losses of normal mortality and catastrophic losses. In the event of a catastrophic loss, ODAFF should be notified before beginning carcass disposal.

### METHODS OF DISPOSAL

There are various methods available for handling catastrophic losses - landfill, incineration, field composting, rendering, and burial are all acceptable methods of disposal. This job sheet describes the burial method of disposal. Not every method will work on every farm. Contact your local NRCS or Conservation District office to assist in finding out which methods could be used on your farm.

### Disposal by Burial

Burial of dead animals requires a backhoe or other trenching machine for construction of a pit in preparation of receiving carcasses.

### General considerations for using burial pits

- Do not locate the burial pit closer than 1 foot vertically above the flood plain; or the bottom of the burial pit within 2 feet of a water table or bedrock.
- Do not locate the burial pit within 300 feet of wells, springs, streams, neighboring residences, or public areas.
- Burial pit bottoms shall be relatively level. Length of burial pits may be limited by soil suitability and slope. If more than one pit is required, they shall be separated by a minimum of 3 feet of undisturbed or compacted clay soil.

- Do not locate the burial pit where surface water runoff could enter the pit.
- Do not locate the burial pit where soil erosion could deteriorate the pit or cover material.

### Using NRCS Soil Interpretations

Each local NRCS office maintains a listing of suitability for burial by map unit soil component. Each soil that is mapped in the county will fall into one of the following categories:

- **Not Limited** – Soils are adequate for burial. These are the preferred areas for locating burial pits.
- **Somewhat Limited** – Soils may be used for burial, as long as the limiting considerations are addressed.
- **Very Limited** – Soils are not adequate for burial. No burial pits may be constructed in these soils. Alternative methods of disposal will be required if these are the only available soils on the farm.

Site suitability for catastrophic loss pits must be completed in the field by NRCS personnel.

### PROCEDURES FOR USING BURIAL PITS

- Dig a trench at least four feet wide to a minimum depth of 3 feet. Maximum vertical trench wall is 4 feet. For trenches deeper than 4 feet vertical, the earthen wall shall be sloped back at 2 feet horizontal and 1 foot vertical.
- Begin placing animals in one end of the pit. One layer of carcasses will be followed with a minimum depth of soil equal to the carcass depth, not to exceed 3 layers of carcasses and covered with a minimum of 2 1/2 feet of soil above the last layer. For poultry, multiple layers of carcasses can be used, not to exceed two feet in thickness.
- As the animals begin to decay, it may be necessary to place additional soil material in areas that subside.
- Vegetate the fill areas or insure that vegetation establishes naturally.

### OVERCOMING LIMITATIONS

Not all soils located on a farm may be suited for burial without adequately addressing the limitations that prevent dead animals from being disposed by burial in an environmentally sound manner. The following limitations may be identified for your soils. Each limitation presented also lists procedures for overcoming those limitations. In

some cases, there may be multiple limitations that must be addressed for a given soil or location.

**Slope** – Overhead water must be diverted around the burial location by the use of short diversions.

**Depth to Rock** – The bottom of the pit must be kept shallow and adequate volume created by “mounding” of sidewalls above original ground elevation. Cover over carcasses must consist of a minimum of 2 1/2 feet of soil.

**Flooding** – Dikes must be installed to keep floodwaters out of burial area.

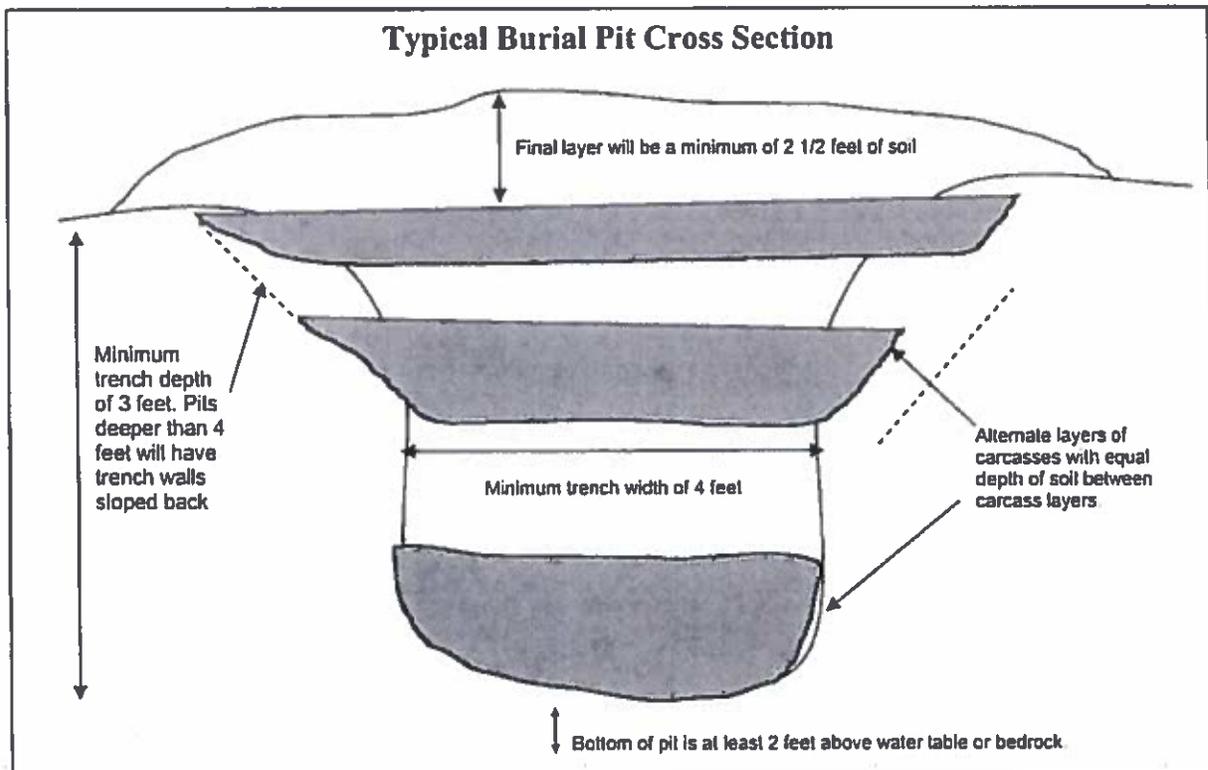
**Fragments or Stones** – There are no specific construction requirements to meet, but difficulty will be encountered during mechanical excavation of pit.

**Apparent Water Table – Mounding**, as listed in Depth to Rock.

**Perched Water Table** – There are various methods available for addressing perched water tables.

These include:

- Mounding, as listed in Depth to Rock.
- Providing drainage of the perched water table with perforated drainage pipe to open drainage ditches. (The integrity of the burial pit must be maintained and the pit, with its protective soil layer, must be left undisturbed with the installation of any drainage system.)
- Sealing off perched zones with compacted backfill.
- Using a 30 ml geosynthetic containment liner, overlapping at the top.



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