

Guidelines for disposal of dead animals and offal

■ Introduction

This fact sheet contains the guidelines for disposing of carcasses and offal in a manageable and environmentally-sound way.

Dead animals and offal must be disposed of appropriately so that they will not produce odour, cause health problems, or result in groundwater and waterway contamination. Decomposing dead stock can cause disease and impact on aquatic species through oxygen depletion of water.

When disposing of the dead animals and offal on your property, it is important that you are aware of the rules outlined in the Proposed Auckland Regional Plan: Air Land and Water (PARP:ALW).

Rule 5.5.34(i) of the Plan allows the disposal of livestock and offal (using offal holes, shallow trenches or composting) as a Permitted Activity, provided the associated rules are followed (Note: commercial animal processing businesses require a consent for disposal of offal and carcasses).

Where possible, carcasses should be picked-up by a licensed dead stock carrier. Otherwise, carcasses may be buried, put in a covered offal hole or composted.



■ Guidelines for Offal Holes

- Recommended for disposal of small, infrequent amounts of animal offal. A recommended maximum total volume of 0.3 metres³ may be disposed of at any one time in a hole.
- The top of the offal hole should be covered with a heavy lid to keep the pit safe from children, inaccessible for dogs/vermin and prevent stormwater entry.
- Discontinue the use of a hole once the pit is filled within one metre of the surface; backfill the pit with compacted earth and re-grass.
- Do not dig offal holes within 20 metres of any waterway, within 100 metres of any water supply bore, or within 45 metres of farm dairy shed or tanker loop.
- Offal pits should be sited well away (minimum 100 metres) from any retired pits that have been used within the previous five years.
- Do not dig holes any closer than one metre above the groundwater level; do not use this method if groundwater level is high.

■ Guidelines for Shallow Graves and Trenches

- Dead stock should be buried as soon as possible in a shallow grave or trench; this must not be situated within 20 metres of any waterway and not within 100 metres of any water supply bore.
- Never dispose of carcasses into farm dairy oxidation ponds, internal farm drains or any other water course.
- Do not use this method if groundwater level is high.
- Predator and vermin control is required – make sure the grave is backfilled immediately and that carcasses are well covered.
- Select an area of clay or impervious soil to avoid contamination of groundwater.
- Do not bury animals in the flood plain of a waterway.



■ Guidelines for Composting

- Composting is a biological process by which carcasses are completely broken down within months; the high temperatures generated by the process destroys pathogens and prevents fly incubation.
- The carbon : nitrogen ratio of the material should be at least 5:1.
- A carbon supplement such as straw or sawdust is needed; sawdust is recommended because of its small particle size and high absorbency to minimize leachate production.
- The process must be aerobic to minimise odour; the compost heap must be kept moist (not saturated) and have good aeration.
- Composting materials should be contained on a bunded impervious surface and protected from rainfall.
- All leachate from compost must be directed to a treatment system; this will avoid groundwater contamination by leachate.

■ Safety tips

- Keep dead stock and offal out of waterways at all times.
- Dispose of carcasses as soon as possible.
- Do not dispose of inorganic wastes such as chemical containers or farm rubbish into offal pits.
- Slit the stomach of the carcass and add bacterial starter (e.g. pond sludge) to speed up the decomposition process.
- Do not add lime.
- Do not feed animal carcasses or offal to pigs.
- Re-use untreated calf shed sawdust for composting material.
- Avoid applying finished compost onto pasture grazed by livestock.
- Do not light fires near offal holes since explosive gases may be present.



■ For more information

Phone the ARC on 09 366 2000 and press 1 for further information and advice or phone the 24 hour pollution hotline on 09 377 3107.

The ARC has a range of fact sheets relating to farm waste discharge rules and best practice guidelines. Copies are available online at www.arc.govt.nz or upon request.

How do I contact the ARC?

21 Pitt Street

Private Bag 92 012

Auckland

Ph: 09 366 2000 or toll free 0800 80 60 40

Water Pollution Hotline 09 377 3107

Fax: 09 366 2155

Email: info@arc.govt.nz

Website: www.arc.govt.nz

