



Conservation Practice Overview

Composting Facility (Code 317)

A structure or device to contain and facilitate an aerobic microbial ecosystem for the decomposition of manure, other organic material, or both, into a final product sufficiently stable for storage, onfarm use, and application to land as a soil amendment.



Practice Information

A composting facility is designed to produce an amendment that adds organic matter and beneficial organisms to the soil, provides slow-release plant-available nutrients, and improves soil health. This amendment can be applied to the land or marketed to the public.

Organic solid wastes to be composted derive primarily from agricultural production or processing. The compost can be reused in the operation, utilized for crop production, improve soil health, or marketed to the public.

Composting is accomplished by mixing a carbon material with a nitrogen-rich material in a manner that encourages the growth of aerobic bacteria. Bins, windrows, or in-vessel structures, such as a rotary drum, can be used.

Design information for this practice includes site location, design sizing, storage period, and safety/biosecurity features. It may also include fabricated structure criteria.

This practice has a minimum expected life of 15 years. Operation requirements for the facility depend on the type of facility chosen by the producer. For every system, the temperature and moisture content of the compost will be monitored frequently. Bin or windrow compost must be turned at least once during the composting process. The operation and maintenance plan includes provisions for proper utilization of residual material. Routine maintenance is needed to ensure the facility operates as designed.

Common Associated Practices

NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Composting Facility (Code 317) is commonly applied with NRCS CPSs Roofs and Covers (Code 367), Roof Runoff Structure (Code 558), Heavy Use Area Protection (Code 561), Waste Storage Facility (Code 313), and Waste Transfer (Code 634). Utilization of composted material will be handled in accordance with NRCS CPS Nutrient Management (Code 590). If animal mortality is to be composted, use NRCS CPS Animal Mortality Facility (Code 316). If animal manure solids are just being stored without managing for composting, use NRCS CPS Waste Storage Facility (Code 313).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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