

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR  
ANIMAL MORTALITY FACILITY**

**CODE 316**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Legal Desc. \_\_\_\_\_

Ident. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
County \_\_\_\_\_

A properly operated and maintained animal mortality facility is an asset to your farm. This structure was designed and installed to decrease non-point source pollution of surface water and groundwater resources, to reduce the impact of odors that result from improperly handled animal carcasses, to decrease the likelihood of the spread of disease or other pathogens that result from the interaction of animal carcasses and predators, or to provide contingencies for normal and catastrophic mortality events.

The estimated life span of this installation is at least 15 years. The life of this installation can be assured and usually increased by developing and carrying out a good operation and maintenance program.

This practice will require you to perform periodic operation and maintenance for satisfactory performance. Here are some recommendations to help you develop a good operation and maintenance (O&M) program.

**General Recommendations**

- Develop a method and procedure for carcass disposal due to normal losses.
- Develop a method and procedure for carcass disposal due to catastrophic losses.
- Develop a procedure to address safety and biosecurity concerns.
- Have a list of contact(s) and phone numbers of person(s) to contact in case of catastrophic losses.

- Maintain records of date, average weight, and number of deaths of animals or poultry.
- Establish a guideline for periodic inspections.
- Promptly repair or replace damaged components.
- Maintain an on-site list of references and/or manufacturer or installer for troubleshooting of equipment problem.

**Additional O&M for Incinerators and Gasifiers**

- Use incinerators and gasifiers only for the disposal of animal carcasses.
- Operate units properly to maximize equipment life and minimize emission problems.
- Load the units according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Remove ashes frequently to maximize combustion and prevent damage to equipment. Include methods for collecting and disposing of the ash material remaining after incineration.
- Inspect the units periodically to ensure that all components are operating as planned and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

**Additional O&M for Refrigeration Units**

- Operate refrigeration units properly to maximize equipment life and minimize potential problems.
- Load the refrigeration unit according to the manufacturer's recommendations and do not exceed the design capacity.
- Use refrigeration units only for the dead animals associated with the planned operation.
- Inspect the refrigeration unit periodically for leaks, structural integrity, and temperature.

#### **Additional O&M for Composters**

- Include a recipe of ingredients which gives the layering/mixing sequence.
- Provide maximum and minimum temperatures for operation, land application rates, moisture level, management of odors, testing, etc.
- Inspect the compost facility regularly when the facility is empty.
- Replace or repair any damaged structural components.
- Closely monitor temperatures above 165°F. Take action immediately to cool piles that have reached temperatures above 185°F.
- Include the method, procedure, and recordkeeping requirements for proper disposal of compost.

#### **Additional O&M for Catastrophic Mortality**

Identify locations for catastrophic animal mortality disposal. Maintain recordkeeping of number, average weight, cause, and date of animal deaths. Contact your local county emergency management director since there may be specific requirements dependent upon cause of death, livestock species, and housing.

Burial of catastrophic mortality shall be timed to minimize the effects of carcass expansion during early stages of the decay process. Where possible and permitted by state law, carcasses shall remain uncovered or lightly covered until bloating has occurred. Some topsoil shall be retained to re-grade the disposal site after the ground has settled when most of the decay process has been completed.

Where composting is used for catastrophic carcass disposal, identify in the O&M plan the most likely compost medium, possible compost recipes, operational information, and equipment that will need to be readily available.

#### **Specific Recommendations for this Project**

**If you need additional technical assistance to implement the operation and maintenance plan for this structure, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) at your local USDA Service Center (listed in the telephone book under United States Government).**